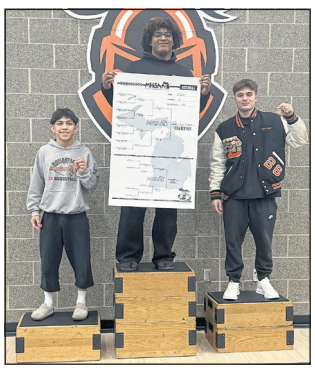
Today's
The Herald-Palladium
included inside



Dowagiac's Reyna reigns supreme at individual wrestling regionals
Page B1

Stay Safe
Be mindful of your surroundings, especially in unfamiliar or dimly lit areas. Trust your instincts - if something feels off, move to a safer location if possible. Encourage neighbors to establish a neighborhood watch program to keep our communities safe.

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Dowagiac News

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Dowagiac Museum announces its 2026 Spring Lecture Series

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — The Dowagiac Area History Museum has announced its 2026 Spring Lecture Series, kicking off at 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 4 at 201 E. Division St., with Timothy Moore of Lake Michigan College presenting a look at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair titled, "The World's Fair Was Worth It Even If It Did Take All the Burial Money."

The title of the program comes from a quote from a farmer to his wife as they were leaving the World's Fair of 1893. Over 130 years later, the Columbian Exposition still fascinates the American public. Held in Chicago to commemorate Christopher Columbus' voyage to the New World in 1492, the Columbian Exposition featured sights championing human progress in manufacturing, the arts and many other areas. The "White City" powered by electric lights showcased new machines and products (such as Cracker Jacks, Juicy Fruit Gum, and Quaker Oats) and captivating forms of entertainment, such as the novel Ferris Wheel.

It also introduced Americans to many world cultures. There was, however, a dark side to the fair as a mass murderer lurked in Chicago and the city's mayor was assassinated

See **MUSEUM**, page A4

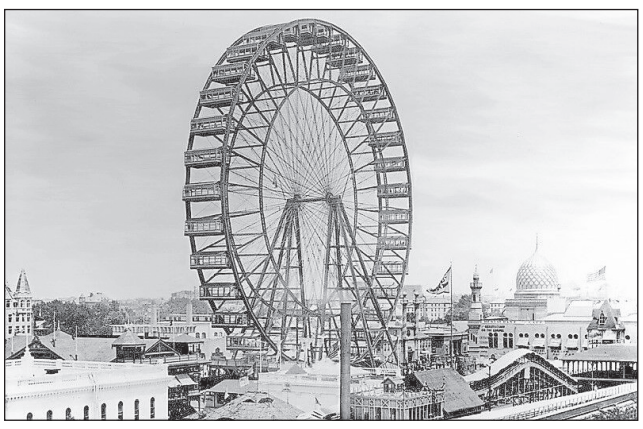

Photo provided
The Ferris Wheel was first unveiled at the 1893 World's Fair.

Cassopolis school board recognizes the Region Teacher of the Year

By JUSTIN FLAGEL
Leader Publications Contributor

CASSOPOLIS — The Cassopolis Board of Education met for a brief meeting on Monday in the Cassopolis High School Media Center.

Superintendent Dr. John Ritzler mentioned Cassopolis Ross Beatty High School English teacher Julie Herwick, who was recently announced by the Michigan Department of Education as the Region 7 2026-2027 Teacher of the Year. Herwick has taught at Cassopolis Public Schools for more than 25 years and has four decades of teaching experience.

The Regional Teachers of the Year were selected through a competitive application process that began with Michigan Teacher of the Year nominations from students, staff and community members from across the state. The 2026-27 honorees were selected for their dedication to the teaching profession, as evidenced by their commitment to students and their records of service in the teaching profession.

Herwick is now a finalist for the 2026-27 Michigan Teacher of the Year.

The board congratulated students who recently competed in the 42nd Cass County Spelling Bee. The Cassopolis fourth, sixth, and seventh grade teams placed 3rd, while the fifth and eighth grade teams placed 4th.

The school board heard details about the Fifth Grade Camp, taking place May 6-8. Students will have the opportunity for project-based learning and team-building with the goal of building confidence through activities like canoeing, frog dissection, archery, pond-skimming, and learning about edible foods in the wild. It was noted that students are not required to stay overnight at the camp in order to participate in activities. The board will

See **TEACHER**, page A4

Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications
The Cass County Council on Aging hosted Julie Johnson, owner of Caruso's Candy and Soda Shop in Dowagiac, for a presentation on the business' 104-year history Wednesday at the Edward Lowe Center in Cassopolis.

Sweet memories

Caruso's owner presents sweet shop's 104-year history in Dowagiac

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

CASSOPOLIS — A historic southwest Michigan sweet shop took community members on a trip down memory lane Wednesday morning.

The Cass County Council on Aging hosted Julie Johnson, owner of Caruso's Candy and Soda Shop in Dowagiac, for a presentation on the business' 104-year history Wednesday at the Edward Lowe Center in Cassopolis. Johnson, a third-generation owner of Caruso's, explained the history of Caruso's, answered questions and provided guests with samples of chocolate.

Antonio and Amelia Caruso, who migrated from Italy as children, opened Caruso's at 130 S. Front St. Dowagiac on Sept. 22, 1922. The building was built in 1899 and formerly housed a Chicago Candy Company location. The Carusos spent the next few decades instilling the tradition of a family-owned-and-operated business into their children and grandchildren.

"A lot of people are shocked that we are in the same location," Johnson said. "We get people who don't know the

See **MEMORIES**, page A4

Cass Family Clinic to offer healthcare career training programs

SUBMITTED

CASSOPOLIS — Cass Family Clinic is now providing workforce training opportunities to those seeking a career in the healthcare industry thanks to a grant from Michigan's Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity.

The Health Center Career Training Program, operated by the Michigan Primary Care Association, provides participants with one-year online and hands-on technical assistance, resources, and program monitoring. The grant, which is effective through the end of 2026, covers operational costs per cohort, as well as individual trainee funding based upon each student's program completion.

Cass Family Clinic offers medical assistant, dental assistant, community health worker and pharmacy technician training programs at its Cass and Niles locations. Two positions are available per field with one at each location. Upon completing the training program, students earn a certification in their respective field, which they can use to apply for a job at Cass Family Clinic or with another organization.

"At Cass Family Clinic, strengthening the healthcare workforce is essential to strengthening the communities we serve," said Cass Family Clinic CEO Joe Gavan. "With support from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, and the Michigan Primary Care Association, we're creating pathways into meaningful healthcare careers while ensuring our region has the skilled professionals needed to deliver high-quality care close to home."

Tiara Brown, who is currently enrolled in Cass Family Clinic's dental assistant training program, joined as a way to jumpstart a career in dentistry.

"Being a dental assistant can be challenging, but every

See **CLINIC**, page A4

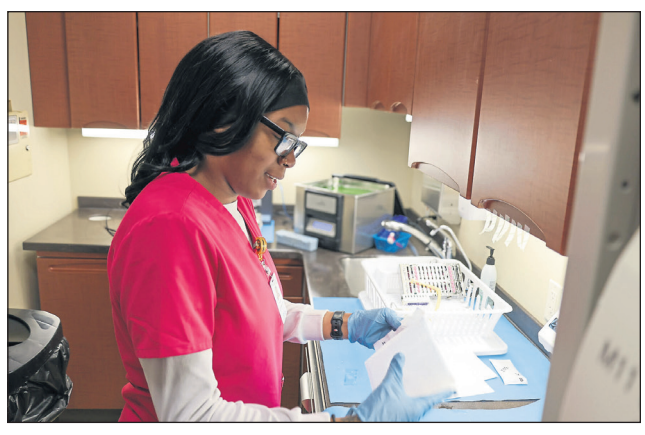

Photo provided
Tiara Brown is currently enrolled in Cass Family Clinic's dental assistant training program.

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SMC hosts area bands for Clinic Day

By JOHN EBY
Southwestern Michigan College

DOWAGIAC — Southwestern Michigan College's sixth annual Clinic Day Feb. 20 featured five area high school bands and 200 musicians critiqued by Oakland University Assistant Professor of Music Dr. Pam Klena.

The critiques polish March Southwestern Michigan Band and Orchestra Association (SWMBOA) festival programs.

SMC Director of Bands Mark Hollandsworth's Symphonic Band and Jazz Ensemble each performed two numbers to cap the morning before a pizza lunch.

Hollandsworth's musicians road-tested selections for "Among Us," the winter concert at 7 p.m. Feb. 27 highlighting living composers.

SMC's band previewed "Remembering," rehearsed Feb. 17 with LeAndre Benton.

While Benton lives in the Dallas area, SMC spent an hour virtually that afternoon as he evaluated their performance, worked with soloists and sections and related his career as a performer, composer, educator, principal and Division I basketball referee.

Photo provided
Dowagiac band members perform during Southwestern Michigan College's sixth annual Clinic Day.

Visiting bands Feb. 20 included: Dowagiac Union High School Concert Band, directed by Benjamin VanRoekel, 2019 SMC graduate; Bridgman High School Concert Band, directed by Cliff Reppart, with Skylar Pullins, instructional aide; Watervliet High School Band, directed by Jennifer Hollandsworth, with Eleanor Joyce, student teacher; Coloma High School Band, directed by Marc Hartman; and Covert High School Band, directed by Nicole Bell.

Dowagiac and Coloma both performed David Shaffer's "Fire Dance."

Clinic Day, introduced on Valentine's Day in 2020 and canceled by COVID-19 in 2021, resumed in 2022 in the theatre of the Dale A. Lyons Building on the Dowagiac campus. It is co-sponsored with Quinlan and Fabish Music Co., Stevensville.

Each band receives a similar experience of an hour on stage, playing three festival selections, with the remaining time devoted to tips from the animated Klena, who sprinkles in topical references, such as, "You're either Bad Bunny the melody or the bushes in the background" of the Super Bowl halftime show.

From band to band, Klena prods them to produce more air support, especially on slower, quieter passages.

"I would argue you take in more air for slower pieces, which can be extremely impactful and breathtakingly beautiful if you give slow pieces a chance."

Her origins are in low brass – trumpet, euphonium, tuba and trombone.

Klena conducts the Oakland University Symphonic Band, teaches instrumental music education methods courses and graduate conducting and supervises student teachers.

She holds the Doctorate of Musical Arts degree from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Klena earned her Master of Music degree from Central Michigan University.

Klena received the Bachelor of Music Education degree from Lee University in Cleveland, Tenn.

During her time at Lee, she traveled internationally, promoting music education and leading master classes in countries such as Jordan, Brazil and Kenya.

She is the current president of Women Band Directors International (WBDI), an international organization for women band directors promoting women, providing support and community and mentoring women in the band field.

She also was a founding member of a local beginning band program that afforded fifth-grade band students with free private lessons taught by college students.

Prior to her graduate studies, Klena was the Director of Bands at Trinity Christian School in Sharpsburg, Ga. She taught beginning, middle and high school band, general music courses and conducted school musicals. She participated in the Georgia All-State Band.

Southwestern Michigan College announces social work technician credential and Olivet partnership

SUBMITTED

DOWAGIAC — Southwestern Michigan College has announced that graduates of the Associate of Applied Science in Social Work program will be eligible to apply for the Social Service Technician license through the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs.

An SST assists clients in accessing needed social programs, working under a social worker or case manager to assess needs, providing support and managing cases, with common duties including intake, referrals, crisis intervention, documentation and connecting people to resources such as food, housing or childcare.

In social work, licensure is key to employment, further education and higher income potential.

"It is a credential that requires 60 hours of social work education in addition to work experience in the field," Professor Christi Young said. "Students who graduate from our program are eligible as soon as they are employed in the field. It is a credential that adds merit to our degree and options for students as it is a billable license for health insurances."

The SST credential formally recognizes individuals who are qualified to provide supervised social services across Michigan's human-service agencies. By aligning the AAS curriculum with SST standards, SMC is expanding opportunities for graduates and helping meet the growing need for credentialed professionals across the state.

Graduates become immediately eligible to apply for SST registration, opening employment pathways with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, community mental health agencies and social-service nonprofits.

SST registration complements transfer options to bachelor's programs while providing a direct-to-work credential.

SMC also signed articulation agreements with both Olivet and Western Michigan universities.

The partnership with Olivet, signed Dec. 8, creates a seamless transfer pathway for SMC students to complete their BSW degree entirely online through Olivet's Council on Social Work Education-accredited program.

This latest agreement strengthens SMC's long-standing commitment to "knowledge for all" by expanding affordable, high-quality academic opportunities that meet students where they are – academically, geographically and financially.

Students entering the program benefit from Olivet's personalized approach to practicum oversight. Faculty and field coordinators work closely with each student to identify appropriate practicum placements within their home communities, removing any need to relocate while still ensuring rich, hands-on learning experiences.

Young said an advantage to having arrangements with both Olivet and Western is "they serve very different student profiles. They are not redundant. At this point, WMU is largely face-to-face for BSW, but has online options for MSW. With our program being online, it will serve students who want the on-campus experience."

"Olivet offers a faster pace (eight-week quarters for some classes) that can be seen as more flexible," Young continued. "It is also adult-friendly and potentially lower cost – especially for Pell students. Online tuition is $400/credit hour. They have a similar admission standard to SMC, with a 2.5 granting automatic admission for AAS completers."

"While it is online completion-focused, students can live on campus and join athletic teams as well," Young said.

Under April 7's WMU agreement, students can complete their AAS in social work at SMC, transfer all their credits to WMU, finish their bachelor's degree in two years, then complete their Master of Social Work degree in just 10 months on an accelerated track.

"Any BSW that is certified by the CSWE offers an Advanced Standing MSW, so both WMU and Olivet allow pathways into accelerated master's programs," Young said.

Death notices

Devon Edward Brady, 34, passed away on Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2026, in Niles, Michigan. Arrangements have been entrusted to and are pending with Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Connie Marie Lawrence, 76, of Berrien Springs, Michigan, formerly of Wooster, OH, and Chicago, IL, passed away in Chicago on Feb. 23 at Northwestern Medicine. Arrangements have been entrusted to Allred Funeral Home in Berrien Springs, Michigan. www.AllredFuneralHome.com.

Dona Elaine Katharina Maxfield, 66, of Buchanan, Michigan, passed away on Feb. 17, 2026. Services will be held at Venue 8 in Hillsdale, Michigan on Sunday, March 1 at 5:30 p.m. Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

John Patterson Meyer, 76, of Niles, Michigan, passed away on Feb. 5, 2026. Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

David Henry Reits, 79, passed away on Monday, Feb. 23, 2026, in Mishawaka, Indiana. Arrangements have been entrusted to and are pending with Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Robert Lee Shepard Sr., 83, of Niles, Michigan, passed away on Feb. 20, 2026. Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Jeffery Robert Steele, 59, passed away on Monday, Feb. 23, 2026, in Niles, Michigan. Arrangements have been entrusted to and are pending with Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

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OBITUARIES

Betty Hershberger

Sept. 7, 1939 – Feb. 21, 2026

Betty Jane Hershberger, 86, of Cassopolis, died peacefully Saturday, Feb. 21, 2026. Her life began Sept. 7, 1939, in Cassopolis, Michigan, the tenth of 13 children born to Joseph and Minnie Sheteron. She married James Adrian Hershberger Sept. 5, 1959, in Cassopolis, Michigan. After almost 59 years of marriage, he preceded her in death in 2018.

Betty attended and graduated from Cassopolis High School in 1959. She started attending Diamond Cove Missionary Church in 1955, making her the oldest living member of the church. Her faith was vitally important to her. Betty enjoyed taking her family fishing all over the state. She was a home maker for most of her life but spent several years as a teacher's aid at Cassopolis Public Schools.

Betty and Jim purchased a cabin in Baldwin in 2003. This became a center piece for the family. She loved being outdoors, rafting, canoeing and camping. She could often be found outside mowing the lawn and gardening, or inside, quilting, crocheting, knitting and canning. She expressed her creativity by being a floral designer for Theresa of Edwardsburg and making cakes for birthdays and weddings.

Most of all she enjoyed her family, especially going out with her grandchildren. Betty will be greatly missed by family and friends.

She is survived by two daughters, Sherry Hunt of Edwardsburg, Becky (Kevin) Wright of Cassopolis; three sons, James (Teresa) Hersberger of Vandalia, twins, Keith Hershberger, Kevin (Jill) Hershberger, both of Cassopolis; 10 grandchildren; Sherry Linn (Robert) Bloss, Cody Pappas, Stephanie Hershberger Knepple, Dan (Wren) Hershberger, James W. (Allison Elrod) Hershberger, Ruth Ann Wright, Kayla Hershberger, Kyle (Kaylee Perrigo) Hershberger, Andrew (Calie) Hershberger, Arminda Hershberger Dussel; 12 great grandchildren, Camren Pappas, Brody Knepple, William Hershberger, Wyatt Hershberger, Kevin Bruneau, Kaden Bruneau, Dean Dussel, Everly Dussel, Merida Dussel, Jack Hershberger, Zane Hershberger, Ty Below; two brothers, Paul (Ellen) Sheteron, Roy (Mary) Sheteron; her good friend and cousin, June Westphal and a host of nieces and nephews.

In addition to her husband, she was preceded in death by her parents, eight brothers and two sisters.

Family and friends will gather Thursday, Feb. 26 from 6-8 p.m., at Wagner Family Funerals 202 North Broadway, Cassopolis. Her service will be Friday, Feb. 27 10 a.m., in Diamond Cove Missionary Church, 22830 Diamond Cove Road, Cassopolis, with the Rev. Charles Keller officiating.

Betty will be laid to rest beside her beloved husband in a private graveside service in Mission Hills Memorial Gardens in Sumnerville, Michigan.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Betty be made to Cass County Council on Aging for the "Handy Helpers," P.O. Box 5, Cassopolis, MI 49031, or Diamond Cove Missionary Church, 22830 Diamond Cove Rd., Cassopolis, MI 49031.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis.

Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

Marty Liggett

March 4, 1940 – Feb. 6, 2026

Marty Wayne Liggett, 85, of Niles, died peacefully Friday, Feb. 6, 2026.

His life began March 4, 1940, in South Bend, Indiana, the child of Cecil and Marjorie Liggett. He married Diane Fougerousse on March 12, 1960, in the First Presbyterian Church in Niles.

Marty's claim to fame was that he lost to Milt Pappas one to nothing despite throwing a no hitter. Milt Pappas went on to play major league ball. He loved to dance and he and Diane won a dance-a-thon in 1959. He was known for his jitterbug. He played fast pitch softball for several years. Marty went on to compete in triathlons from the age of 50 to 75. He placed in every race he competed in.

He was a 1958 graduate of Niles High School where he was a thespian and received nine varsity letters for his athletic ability. Marty enjoyed the Chicago Cubs and Blackhawks but was an avid Bears fanatic. He had a deep love of chocolate, movies, and '50s rock 'n' roll.

He was ahead of his time: He raised strong, independent women that could do anything they put their minds to. He cherished his wife and daughters, but they also knew that he loved and supported them no matter what.

He was a big part of his community and was active in the Parks and Recreation Department. He was an instrumental part of bringing the River Valley Trail that runs from Niles to South Bend to fruition.

Marty will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by his daughters, Kelly Maxwell of Niles, Marci Katzenberger of South Bend, IN; four grandchildren, Kateasha Crespo of Niles, Dillon Wayne Crespo of Niles, Cali Katzenberger of South Bend, IN, Wyatt Katzenberger of South Bend; six great grandchildren, Dakota Wayne Crespo, Abbyrose Crespo, Aubriana Holmes, Annabelle Crespo Ainsley Hoilmes, Denny Wayne Crespo; son-in-law, David Crespo, Sr. of Niles; and a few nieces, nephews, and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his beloved wife; daughter, Tracy Crespo; son-in-law, Wayne Maxwell; and grandson, David Crespo, Jr.

Family and friends will gather to celebrate Marty's life at a future time and date to be announced. Marty will be laid to rest with his beloved wife Mission Hills Memorial Gardens.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, Niles. Please share a memory or a message online: halbritterwickens.com.

Barbara L. Phillips

Jan. 19, 1936 – Feb. 22, 2026

Barbara L. Phillips, 90, passed away on Sunday morning, Feb. 22, 2026, at Forest Glen Assisted Living in Dowagiac. She was born on Jan. 19, 1936, in South Haven, the third of four children to Hugh and Thelma (Sherwood) Burrows. As a child, Barb enjoyed time on the beach and playing with her siblings and cousins. She was a 1954 graduate of South Haven High School. "Go Rams!"

As a young woman, Barb had numerous jobs; babysitting, telephone operator, and usher at a local theater. After graduation, she moved to Kalamazoo and began work at Upjohn Pharmaceuticals, where she made many friends.

One of those friends brought Barb to Dowagiac. During that visit, she met the love of her life, Tom Phillips. Following a short courtship, they were married in Dowagiac on June 29, 1957. They honeymooned in Mackinaw and were witness to the last sections of the Mackinaw Bridge being constructed.

In 1958, Barb gave birth to their daughter, Kelly, followed by their son, David in 1961. Barb began working as a "Lunch Lady" for Dowagiac Schools in 1968, where she worked for 29 years.

Barb enjoyed many things, including snowmobiling, cross country skiing, fishing, cycling, and her favorite, traveling. Barb and Tom built a cabin in Wellston, MI and spent many days, weeks, and years there doing the many activities she enjoyed. But mostly, she loved sitting around the fire, cooking and enjoying friends and family.

Barb and Tom converted a travel van to many of the 48 states. They went on cruises to the Bahamas, Hawaii and Alaska. Barb lost her love, Tom, one day before their 65th anniversary. She never fully recovered from that loss and has now joined him to continue their eternal journey.

Surviving are her two children, Kelly Phillips and David Phillips; three grandsons, Scott Keene, Bradley (Ally) Phillips, and Eric Phillips; five great-grandchildren, Ellie, Hudson, Sutton, Harper and Kaleb.

Preceding her in death were her loving husband, Tom; parents; and three siblings, Charles Burrows, Bruce Burrows and Patricia Teske.

A service to celebrate Barb's life will be held at 1 p.m., on Monday, March 2 at Clark Chapel, Starks Family Funeral Homes, 405 Center St., Dowagiac, where friends may visit with her family from 12 p.m. until the time of service. Private family inurnment will be in Riverside Cemetery, Dowagiac.

To share a memory or offer condolences, please visit Barb's personalized webpage at www.clarkch.com.

Lorraine Dembinski

Aug. 29, 1930 – Feb. 23, 2026

Lorraine Rose Dembinski, a beacon of love and kindness, was welcomed into the arms of the Lord on Feb. 23, 2026. Born on Aug. 29, 1930, in South Bend, Indiana, Lorraine's life was a testament to the enduring power of faith, family, and the joy of simple pleasures.

Lorraine was the cherished daughter of the late John and Rose (Robakowski) Hes. Her heart found its match in Costek John Dembinski, whom she wed in holy matrimony on Sept. 4, 1948, at St. Stanislaus Catholic Church in South Bend. Their marriage was a harmonious blend of devotion and companionship that lasted fifty-seven years until Costek's passing in 2006.

Although Lorraine was preceded in death by her beloved sons, Ted and Edward Dembinski, her grandson Arthur Rose, her son-in-law Kenneth Rose, and her siblings Clem and Frank Hes, Virginia Rancher, Isabel Jaronik, and Maryanne Winquist, her legacy continues through her loving family.

She is survived by her four devoted children: Patty Rose of South Bend, Fred (Ethel) Dembinski of Omaha, Nebraska, Christine (Ben) Hahaj of South Bend, and Daniel (Vicki) Dembinski of Laingsburg, Michigan. Lorraine's joy was multiplied with each addition to her family, spanning fourteen grandchildren, and numerous great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren, all of whom were blessed by her love, wisdom, and the cherished comical stories she so loved to share.

Lorraine's life was a portrait of service and dedication to her faith and family. As a homemaker, she created a warm and welcoming home where all were nurtured and cherished. Her devout Christian spirit found expression through her active membership at St. Mark Catholic Church in Niles, Michigan, where she served the Lord and her community with a humble and joyful heart. Her interests were as rich and varied as the life she led.

Lorraine's hands were rarely still, whether she was tending to her vibrant garden, engrossed in a word search puzzle, or perusing antique treasures. Her culinary skills as a baker, particularly her Kefflies, were legendary, and her beautiful voice graced the church choir for over three decades. It was a voice so pure and uplifting that it once soared in song for Pope John Paul II – an honor that deeply touched her faithful heart.

Lorraine's life was marked by her loving nature, her kindness that knew no bounds, and the humor that brought smiles to all who knew her. Her unique ability to weave comical stories ensured that her presence was a source of joy and laughter, leaving a lasting impression on countless lives.

Memorial contributions may be made in Lorraine's memory to St. Mark Catholic Church at 3 N. 19th St., Niles, MI 49120. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at St. Mark Catholic Church in Niles on Monday, March 2 at 11 a.m. with Father Peter Rocca, C.S.C. officiating. An interment will follow at Calvary Cemetery. Recitation of The Rosary will be held at the church on Monday at 9:30 a.m. with a time of visitation from 10-11 a.m.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com. As we bid farewell to Lorraine Rose Dembinski, we celebrate a life beautifully lived and a soul that embodied the love of Christ. Her memory will be treasured, her stories retold, and her spirit will continue to inspire those who were fortunate enough to have felt the warmth of her kindness and the joy of her laughter. Lorraine's journey on this earth has ended, but her legacy of love will forever be etched in the hearts of those she leaves behind.

May she rest in peace in the eternal embrace of our Heavenly Father.

Susan Barnes

June 17, 1950 – Feb. 16, 2026

Susan Marie (Behnke) Barnes, 75, of Dowagiac, Michigan, passed away after a brief illness on Feb. 16, 2026, in Kalamazoo, Michigan surrounded by family while listening to Motown music. She was born on June 17, 1950, in Dowagiac, Michigan, to the late Edwin A. Behnke and Patricia L. (Howard) Behnke.

Susan, who went by Sue, Susie, Tootie, Aunt Sue and Sissy, graduated from Dowagiac Union High School in 1968, where she was named junior prom queen and was voted Class Clown and as having the Most Lovable Lips. Shortly after high school Sue began working at James Heddon's Sons Co. But most got to know and love Sue when she managed her family's business, D&D Lounge near Indian Lake. There, Sue made sure both staff and customers were having a good time.

She was known for her practical jokes, sarcastic comebacks and keeping a baseball bat behind the bar in case customers got a bit too unruly. It was while she was working at D&D that she met the love of her life, Charles (Barney) R. Barnes. Soon, those lovable lips were all his and they married on April 12, 1986. Their first dance was to "I Just Called to Say I Love You" by Stevie Wonder, and it remained a favorite and became a theme song for Sue since marrying Barney meant leaving Dowagiac for new adventures in Joliet, Illinois, where he lived and worked. She called home often to catch up with the family and made sure to always say "I love you."

Sue and Barney eventually moved to Minooka, Illinois when Barney retired. Sue continued her career in the restaurant business in a nearby town at Boz Hot Dogs, a job she absolutely loved, mostly because the owners treated her like family. She remained in Illinois until 2014, when she moved back to Dowagiac to be closer to family after Barney's passing.

Besides slinging drinks and hot dogs, Sue loved to golf, mow the yard, sunbathe, play card games, work on jigsaw puzzles, watch games shows and corny reality TV, grill and cook (she made chicken paprika that was phenomenal), and decorate for every season and holiday. She liked a perfectly grilled steak and baked potato with extra butter. She'd occasionally enjoy a double shot of peppermint schnapps on the rocks or a White Russian.

She had a favorite summer "outfit" (if you know, you know). She definitely kept her family and friends on their toes with her quick wit, sense of humor and love for all things fun, even if those things could (and sometimes would) get her into trouble – but usually it was the good kind of trouble that you could eventually laugh about.

Most of all, Sue was unapologetically herself. She lived life on her own terms and did not care one iota what others thought of her or her choices. She would tell you off, but then she'd hand you a beer. She would call you one of her many interesting/inappropriate nicknames, and then call you honey. She said things that would make you scratch your head in confusion, but would follow it with a cleverly witty remark. She was the life of the party and enjoyed being the center of attention. She was a force to be reckoned with and she will be deeply missed.

Sue's greatest joy was her loving family, which includes her brother, Michael (Sherrie Taylor) Behnke of Dowagiac; her sister and best friend, Patricia Ann Behnke of Dowagiac; two nieces, Melissa (Brian) Phillips of Dowagiac and Meredith (Aaron) Marrs of Niles; two great nephews, Drew Phillips of Grand Rapids and Nate (Sarah Spitzke) of Dowagiac; one great niece, Audrey Marrs of Niles; and two great-great nieces, Penelope Hall and Phoebe Phillips, both of Dowagiac; her special cousins, "Sissy" Kathy (Sestric) DeWald of Scottsdale, AZ; her dear friend groups "The F-Troop" and the "Whalers," and a plethora of cousins and friends.

Sue is preceded in death by her husband, Charles R. Barnes, and her parents, Edwin and Patricia Behnke.

Sue had recently adopted a dog, Boo, and quickly grew to love her and sleep with her. Memorial contributions in Sue's name can be made to Cass County Animal Control, 323 M 62, Cassopolis, MI 49031.

One thing is for certain: if Sue could, she would definitely love to say one last time: "I just called to say I love you." In keeping with Susan's wishes no services are to be held, and cremation is taking place. Palmer Funeral Home- Hoven Chapel is assisting the family with arrangements. If you would like to leave online condolences for Sue and her family, please visit www.palmerfuneralhomes.com.

Kenneth Reed

Sept. 9, 1949 – Feb. 19, 2026

Kenneth Richard Reed 76, of Niles, died Thursday, Feb. 19, 2026. His life began Sept. 9, 1949, in Niles, one of six children born to George and Donna Reed. Kenneth proudly served in the United States Navy from 1967-73.

He was a hard worker and proud Navy sailor. He was stubborn, creative, smart, and passionate. He enjoyed woodworking; making anything and everything and building intricate Lego. Kenneth was an avid Notre Dame fan. He loved hunting, fishing, and camping, which is why he moved back to Michigan.

Kenneth will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by daughters, Tia (Brett Ellison) Reed of Niles, Kristen (Brian) Milburn of Seabrook, Texas; sons, Jeremy Reed of Jackson, Georgia, David Bierwirth of Oklahoma, Ken (Theresa) Reed of Colorado; five grandchildren, Jordan Reed, Austin Reed, Mackenzie Ellison, Brynlee Milburn, Annaliese Reed; sisters, Marcia Kniebes of Michigan, Judi Baxter of Tallahassee, Florida; brothers, Dennis (Lois) Reed of Buchanan, Gary Reed of Baroda; and a host of nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Brian Reed; grandson, Stefan Reed; and best friend, Mick.

The family will observe a private remembrance. Kenneth will be laid to rest in Silverbrook Cemetery.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Kenneth be made to the New Troy American Legion, 4789 Weechik Rd., New Troy, MI 49119.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, Niles. Please share a memory or a message online: halbritterwickens.com.

TODAY'S WEATHER

Saturday: A 30 percent chance of snow after 1 p.m. Partly sunny, with a high near 37. North wind 5 to 10 mph.

Saturday Night: A 40 percent chance of snow before 1 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 20. North wind 5 to 10 mph.

Obituary policy

Leader Publications publishes death notices at a cost of $15. Extended obituaries are priced based on character count. If there's an error because of a mistake made by the newspaper, the obituary will be reprinted at no charge.

For more information, or to submit an obituary, email obits@leaderpub.com.

SWMI housing market sees dip in sales, inventory

By HP STAFF

ST. JOSEPH — The snowy weather throughout January posed numerous challenges in Southwest Michigan, including dampening the housing market.

According to a report from the Southwestern Michigan Association of Realtors, the number of houses sold in January fell to 135 houses – the lowest level since 2015.

"The year started with a 14 percent drop in inventory of houses for sale, record-setting selling prices, and a small reduction in the mortgage rate," said Luke Jeffries, association executive of the Southwestern Michigan Association of Realtors. "In January 2026, the market ended with an inventory of 614 houses for sale, down from 715 houses for sale in January 2025."

Jeffries said Southwest Michigan homebuyers were facing a 3.7-month supply of homes, down slightly from the 3.9-month supply level in January 2025.

The Freddie Mac mortgage rate in January was 6.10, down slightly from the December rate of 6.15, and down from the 6.95 rate in January 2025 for a 30-year conventional mortgage.

The number of houses sold in January 2026 decreased by 22 percent from what was sold in January 2025.

The average selling price in January 2026 changed by less than 1 percent to $418,285 from $416,393 in January 2025. The January 2026 average selling price was 15 percent lower than the $492,373 price in December 2025.

The January 2026 median selling price rose by 1 percent from a year ago, while the median selling price in December 2025 was $295,000.

The total dollar volume with fewer sales fell 22 percent to $56,468,522 from $72,036,007 in January 2025.

There were two bank-owned or foreclosed homes as a percentage of all transactions in January for the Southwest Michigan housing market.

Across the country

According to the National Association of Realtors, existing-home sales decreased by 8.4 percent in January.

The report provides the real estate ecosystem – including agents, homebuyers and sellers – with data on the level of home sales, price and inventory. Month-over-month and year-over-year sales fell in all regions of the country.

"The decrease in sales is disappointing. The below-normal temperatures and above-normal precipitation this January make it harder than usual to assess the underlying driver of the decrease and determine if this month's numbers are an aberration," said NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun. "Affordability conditions are improving, with NAR's Housing Affordability Index showing that housing is the most affordable it's been since March 2022. This is due to wage gains outpacing home price growth and mortgage rates being lower than a year ago. However, supply has not kept pace and remains quite low."

The median existing-home price for all housing types in January was $396,800, up 0.9 percent from one year ago ($393,400) – the 31st consecutive month of year-over-year price increases.

In the Midwest, existing-home sales fell 7.1 percent in sales month over month to an annual rate of 920,000, down 7.1 percent year over year. The median price in the Midwest was $295,400, up 2.3 percent from January 2025.

Total housing inventory at the end of January was down 0.8 percent from December and up 3.4 percent from January 2025. Unsold inventory sits at a 3.7-month supply at the current level up from 3.5 months in December and one year ago.

"Due to low supply, the median home price reached a new high for the month of January," Yun said. "Homeowners are in a financially comfortable position as a result. Since January 2020, a typical homeowner would have accumulated $130,500 in housing wealth."

MEMORIES

From page A1

history and ask where the original was, but what you see is what it is. We try to keep a lot of the nostalgic history alive, so any updates we do are cosmetic, such as paint and floors."

Caruso's features one of the country's few remaining fully functional soda fountains. In 2022, the shop underwent a renovation which included new floors, new lights, new fans, new tables, new bar chairs, a façade update and some other minor structural changes. Caruso's has operated a lunch counter since its opening, giving it the longest history of serving lunch in Dowagiac.

"I am amazed at how many people don't know that, as we have been serving lunch in Dowagiac longer than anyone else," she said. "I encourage everyone to come and check us out. We don't do fried foods; you won't get a burger or fries here. It's all prepared on a small grill. Everyone's favorite is the toasted tuna, and many people want to try our mixed nuts."

According to Johnson, Caruso's does not fry food because chocolate absorbs odors.

"If we were frying, the chocolate would absorb those grease odors, and we don't want our chocolate to taste like fries," she said. "Additionally, space is a factor because everything is prepared right out in front."

Caruso's ships chocolates and candy as far away as Japan. Johnson said she takes great pride in the candy-making process.

"I use the same recipes my grandparents used, along with the same copper kettles and wooden paddles," she said. "We cook over an open-flame stove in the back room, where I make my own caramel, toffee and creams. I also roast peanuts back there. We make all the seasonal candies like peanut brittle and seafoam. Almost all the classic candies you remember are still available."

The Caruso's recipe handbook is handwritten, which Johnson said can make it difficult to decipher.

"Candy making is basically science; it takes years to learn exactly when to take it off the stove or the precise temperature needed to add the next ingredient. My grandpa told me to copy down his recipes because I would need them, and in today's world, not many people would offer them up like that."

Johnson said if the chocolate is too hot when items are dipped, it can turn white or look a little gray once it dries, which customers mistake for mold.

"A lot of people see that gray color and think it's mold, but it's actually the same age as the candy next to it; the temperature was just a little too warm during the dipping process," she said. "It doesn't happen often, but it does occur."

Johnson said that Caruso's remains true to hand-dipping our candies, which very few places do anymore.

"Other locations might claim their candy is 'handmade' or 'hand-dipped,' but often they just mean they picked it up by hand and placed it on a conveyor belt," she said. "It bugs me when people lie and say their chocolates are hand-dipped just because they picked them out of a container."

While Caruso's does not make its own chocolate, Johnson said she purchases high-quality chocolate that arrives in ten-pound blocks.

"A lot of people think we make our own chocolate from scratch, but we don't. It would be too difficult in today's world," she said. "Many people are amazed by the blocks; they are quite long, wide and thick. We use an ice pick to break them into pieces before they go into the melter. One of the newer things I've bought in the last few years is an automatic chocolate melter and temperer. It keeps the chocolate melted and stirs it constantly… I have separate tempering machines for dark and milk chocolate now, which makes things much easier."

With Valentine's Day in the rearview mirror, Johnson is gearing up for Easter Bunny production.

"It is a huge season for us," she said. "Not many places still make solid Easter bunnies, but all of ours are solid because making hollow ones is too difficult. We have them in all sizes, from tiny to large, and we make chocolate baskets. There are so many unique items that set us apart."

Johnson is grateful for the community support the business has received. She added that the business continues to make its own homemade chocolate syrup using her grandparents' recipe.

"It's cooked in a kettle in the back room. A few years ago, I started bottling and selling it. Most people who buy it are jokingly angry because they say we ruined them for Hershey's," she said.

Johnson brought two photos of her grandparents working in the same back room and using the same tables she does today.

"This is exactly how I remember them," she said. "I was 18 when my grandpa passed away, so I did get to work with him a little bit. We grew up living two doors down, so we were there all the time. One photo shows a copper kettle that we still use today. Another picture shows my Uncle Bill, who took over the store after my grandfather retired. There is also a photo of my grandparents with my Uncle Paul."

Caruso's legacy also extends into neighboring communities like Niles and Buchanan. Johnson's aunt Josephine and her husband Joseph Marazita founded Veni's Sweet Shop in 1939. Kathleen and Paul Marazita founded Marz Sweet Shop in Buchanan in 1947. Johnson reflected on her grandparents' legacy, stating his forward thinking helped the business survive the Great Depression.

"My grandparents were very hard-working. My grandfather was a noble man who did great things for the community," she said. "During COVID, I put a sign out that said, 'We survived the Great Depression, help us survive COVID.' Caruso's was one of the few stores downtown to survive the Depression. I heard the reason they did so well was that one of my grandpa's distributors warned him of a coming sugar shortage. He bought a massive supply and stored it in a building across the alley. Sugar became highly sought after during the Depression, and because he had a supply, he did quite well. At one time, several downtown businesses were facing foreclosure. He bought them and held them for a long time. When things improved, he sold those businesses back to the original owners for exactly what he had paid.

"You just don't see that kind of nobility much anymore."

When asked about suppliers, Johnson said that while she does not have trouble finding good chocolate, prices have gone up over 300 percent since COVID. She stated that because her overhead is low, she can still keep prices down compared to competitors.

"It's unbelievable how fast they rose," she said. "It kills me every time I have to raise a price, but I can't go into the hole; I have to pay the staff, the lights and the taxes. Even so, I am still several dollars cheaper than anywhere else in Southwest Michigan."

One of Johnson's favorite aspects of her job is hearing people's stories about their Caruso's experiences.

"We hear many stories about Caruso's being a place for first dates," she said. "The other day, some kids were sitting at the small table and chairs, and one of the girls noted that in 60 years, they will be talking about sitting there just as people do today. It is neat that you can still have the same experience your grandparents had. In the summer, we see many people from the lake houses who are now the fourth or fifth generation of their family to visit Caruso's. It is wonderful to watch families grow up."

Caruso's continues to be a family business, with Johnson's children and grandchildren helping out when they can. When asked who will take over when she retires, Johnson is not sure but believes Caruso's will continue on regardless of ownership.

"People always ask who is taking over when I'm done, but I don't know. None of [my children or grandchildren] have an interest in it right now; they are pursuing careers where they can make more money, which isn't happening at Caruso's. However, I never expected to be here either, so I'm sure someone will come along."

Photo provided

Katie Simpson is training as a pharmacy technician at Cass Family Clinic while also working there.

CLINIC

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day is a learning experience at Cass Family Clinic," said Brown. "I appreciate the doctors, assistants, and interns who are willing to answer all of my questions. There is plenty of opportunity for growth within Cass Family Clinic."

Katie Simpson, who is completing her pharmacy technician training, shared she was grateful for the opportunity to train for her license while continuing to work at the same time.

"The learning and training I received at Cass Family Clinic have provided me with great resources for my career path in healthcare," Simpson said. "I had a great experience and highly recommend it to others who are interested. I hope it continues to be an opportunity for people like me in the future."

TEACHER

From page A1

vote whether to approve the camp during the March School Board meeting.

The board voted to approve overnight trips for the varsity wrestling team, the boys varsity golf team and the DECA State Competition.

They also approved the hire of new bus driver Melanie Lintz and cast their ballot for the Michigan Association of School Boards Region 6 Board of Directors, voting for Elizabeth O'Dell.

The next regular Board of Education meeting will take place at 5:30 p.m. Monday, March 16.

MUSEUM

From page A1

as the fair closed.

The program, free for museum members and $5 for non-members, will have a capacity of 100 attendees with seating on a first-come basis. For more information, call the museum at 783-2560 or visit www.dowagiacmuseum.info.

2026 Spring Lecture Series

■ March 4: "The World's Fair Was Worth It Even If It Did Take All the Burial Money," by Timothy Moore of Lake Michigan College

■ April 8: "Rosie the Riveter and Beyond: How Women Helped Win World War II," by Jeannette Gutierrez of the Rosie the Riveter Association of Michigan

■ May 6: "A Mini Drill, Birchbark Booklets and a Gold Stove: Dowagiac at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair," by Museum Director Steve Arseneau

■ June 3: "A History of Dowagiac's Lee Memorial Hospital," by Dr. Matt Cripe.

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Baroda petitioners push to dissolve village

Commission to hold meeting on options to disincorporate

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Correspondent

BARODA — A new commission is being set up to consider the disincorporation of the village of Baroda.

A meeting to look into the details of the proposal was canceled this past week at Baroda Village Hall, which comes as a petition asking for a public referendum on the disincorporation was submitted to Baroda Township officials earlier this month.

Both township and village officials have since approved the establishment of the new commission to study the issue and appointed members to it.

Baroda Township appointed Planning Commission Chairman Dave Schultz, Township Clerk Christina Price and Township Supervisor Dennis Krotzer to the commission. Village officials have appointed Julie Elliott, Nikki Andrews and Bradley Mattner. Elliott and Andrews are village trustees.

"The Baroda Township goal will be for the commission to complete a fact-finding report for the residents of Baroda Township and Baroda Village by July 15, 2026, for presentation to both boards in late July in order for this issue to (be) on the Nov. 3, 2026 election," Krotzer said.

Village President Michael Price said they met with their attorney to make sure they are following all the disincorporation steps correctly before they made their commission appointments. Both Price and Krotzer said they expect the commission meetings to be open to the public.

The issue of dissolving the village has been discussed since last year and has been the subject of two petition drives. The first petition started last summer ran out of time to get on last November's ballot, but organizers recirculated the petition in January and submitted the signatures they'd collected to the township.

Petition organizers Jim and Joanna Whitehead said they were inspired to start their effort by the twin ideas of lower taxes and smaller government. Joanna Whitehead said they started asking themselves why they were paying so much more in taxes as village residents than what they'd pay if they were in the township.

"We studied the issue and we honestly believe that we can do more with less," Jim Whitehead said. "The village plows the streets and picks up trash but outside of that, what does the village do for us?"

They noted that high property taxes is a concern for everybody, from young families starting out to older people worried about being able to stay in their home. They noted the influx of second homeowners has only served to raise property values and property taxes.

They reported that they gathered more than 130 signatures on their petitions and only needed 118 for them to go through. The 118 figure represents 15 percent of the number of registered voters in the village.

They said it is their understanding that the village and the township will each appoint three members to the commission which will then research the dissolution issue and bring a recommendation back to both boards in July. The goal is to get the question on the November ballot.

No matter what happens, the Whiteheads said they've enjoyed the process.

"It's been a very enjoyable experience talking to people," Jim Whitehead said. "People just want to be heard. ... We're hoping we can convince people that it will be good for everybody. We both believe that the township is capable of governing both the township and the village."

People have debated the pros and cons of dissolution or disincorporation on Facebook pages since last summer. Some have questioned whether such an action would actually lower taxes for village residents and asked what the unforeseen consequences could be including taking the focus off of other critical local issues.

Municipal law expert Gerald Fisher said it is his understanding that it would require a majority vote in both the village and the township for the village to be disincorporated since the process is being done through a disincorporation commission. If the matter had been put on the ballot through just the petition drive, it would have required a two-thirds vote.

Fisher is a Cooley Law School professor emeritus at Western Michigan University and is a local government and land use law consultant. He said most disincorporation efforts he's seen have come about over residents' concerns taxes and government management.

A 2021 article from the Michigan State University Extension Service on the issue noted that most disincorporation and/or dissolution efforts have not been successful over the decades. The main places where such efforts have been approved by voters have been in Battle Creek and Iron River.

You may be eligible for (a little) money from beef producers

By DANIEL NEMAN
St. Louis Post-Dispatch (TNS)

A lawyer friend sent me a news release about a food-related class-action suit, and then he ruined it all by telling me about it with a whole bunch of shameless puns.

So I'm faced with a conundrum. It's a serious subject, but I can't think about it without laughing.

I said they were shameless puns. I didn't say they weren't funny.

The case involved a group of plaintiffs suing on behalf of a class of people who bought beef at grocery stores. They claimed that several of the largest beef processors conspired to stop competing against each other for market share, causing the price of beef to rise.

Two of the defendants have decided to settle the suit, while still maintaining they did nothing wrong. Tyson Foods has agreed to pay $55 million, and Cargill Meat Solutions Corp. has agreed to pay $32.5 million.

Personally, I think they should pay $32.5 million just for calling themselves Cargill Meat Solutions. Does "meat solutions" sound like something you want to eat or drink?

Several defendants are still fighting the suit: JBS, Swift Beef Co. and National Beef Packing. Should they eventually lose the suit or decide to settle, there will be more money in the pool for everyone who paid more for meat than they allegedly should have.

Even though the current pool of money is $87.5 million, that's not going to translate to a windfall for consumers. It will amount to maybe $9 apiece, my friend estimates, and indeed you can receive payment in (among other things) cards to Amazon, Starbucks and Instacart.

The class of people who are eligible to receive payouts is basically everyone who bought pretty much any cut of beef (other than ground beef) in 26 states – including Illinois and Missouri – between Aug. 1, 2014, and Dec. 31, 2019.

Some other types of beef are not included, such as beef that had been cooked, marinated, seasoned, flavored or breaded. Specialty beef is also not included, such as antibiotic-free, kosher, halal and certified humane. And neither is premium beef, such as USDA prime, organic, grass-fed, Wagyu and "American-Style Kobe Beef."

Filing a claim for a piece of the money pie is easy: You fill out a form (at overchargedforbeef.com) estimating how much money you spent on beef products in those four years, though you may later be required to provide proof – but I don't think I'm going to bother.

My reasoning is much the same as my friend's: "My experience with other class actions makes me skeptical. It seems that in most class actions the lawyers for both sides get big steaks while the consumers get drops of burger grease."

Remember, he's a lawyer, and, "for obvious reasons, I have no problem with lawyers being paid," he writes. I don't have a problem with it, either, though I personally find the percentages charged for contingency fees to be reprehensibly high.

My friend adds that class-action suits such as this one help to regulate companies' conduct, "which is increasingly important in an era of reduced government regulation of companies."

He writes, "Big companies do not care about customers' budget, health or safety as much as they care about profits.

"Somebody needs to ride herd on bad behavior and steer companies to follow the law."

I know, I know. It pains me to admit that I laughed.

What are some home projects that improve everyday life?

By ANGIE HICKS
Ask Angi (TNS)

Saving just a little bit of time every day can make a big impact on your life over time. Luckily, there are a few home projects that can help you save time and energy on a daily basis.

A good place to start is by looking at your daily chores to see what can be automated or made more efficient. For example, if you spend several minutes pre-rinsing dishes every night, it might be time to invest in a new dishwasher. Modern dishwashers are both efficient and effective, so there's no reason to pre-rinse your dishes before throwing them in.

Vladimir Stanisic / Dreamstime / TNS

Appliance upgrades, smart home automations, and landscaping design changes can make your life easier in the long run.

If you spend a lot of time managing your lawn, swapping from grass to low-maintenance ground cover may be a good choice. While grass offers a classic look, it requires regular maintenance that can take up a lot of time. If you don't enjoy lawn maintenance, or if you don't just have the time, look into low-maintenance landscaping, like gravel, native plants or turf.

Adding some smart home features to your home is another easy way to save some time. You can get a robotic vacuum/mop to clean your floors or a smart thermostat that automatically keeps your home at a comfortable temperature.

If you want to take on a larger project, or if you are already planning a remodel, you have even more options. For example, you can swap out carpet or hardwood flooring (which both require specific cleaning to maintain) for a lower-maintenance tile or vinyl flooring. These materials are durable and easy to clean, so you won't have to spend extra time maintaining your floors. Similarly, you can upgrade from a higher-maintenance countertop material, like butcher block or concrete, to a fuss-free, low-maintenance material like quartz.

Unfortunately, not every aspect of your home can be easily automated or made to be low-maintenance. In those cases, you can hire pros for the work on an ongoing basis, which can help reduce the mental load associated with the task. For example, you can hire professional cleaners to clean your home every week at the same time, so you don't have to worry about that task getting done. This philosophy can be applied to cleaning, pest control, lawn maintenance, HVAC maintenance or any other ongoing tasks.

Home maintenance, while important, can sometimes feel like it's taking up all of your time. By prioritizing efficiency and bringing in help when needed, you can save your energy for the things that matter most.

Tweet your home care questions with #AskingAngi and we'll try to answer them in a future column.

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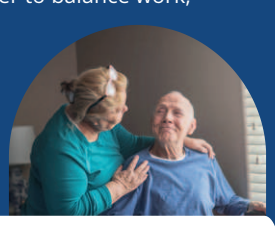
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‘I didn’t know who I was’

Former NFL player talks mental health awareness at LMC

By LAUREN RICE
Paxton Media Group

BENTON TOWNSHIP — Themes of resilience, support and identity were prominent in Todd J. Duckett’s presentation at Lake Michigan College on Wednesday.

The former NFL running back and Southwest Michigan native spoke with students as part of LMC’s Break the Stigma Mental Health Awareness Month.

On Wednesday, Duckett walked the audience through his life story – the success of being drafted into the NFL, creating Duckett Enterprises, starting a family, and the challenge of losing his parents and understanding himself outside of football.

Duckett said he wants people to look at themselves and ask how they can reconnect.

“As you do things through life, it’s like a roller coaster,” he said. “You’re going to have good days, you’re going to have bad days. To be able to have the tools to navigate those good days and the bad days, and knowing excellence is the standard. It’s habits. It’s not being perfect, it’s showing up. It’s effort. Collectively, as a community, we can all do this together.”

From the ages of 8 to 28, Duckett’s primary focus was football. He learned to play, recovered from a knee injury in eighth grade and had to learn how to move forward after his mother died during his freshman year at Michigan State University.

At the time, it was his support system who brought Duckett back to the tools he’s been relying on: goal setting, commitment, discipline, hard work and sacrifice.

After seven years in the NFL, doing what he had always dreamed of and playing for four different teams, Duckett was cut. He said he fell into a depression and had to sit down in front of a mirror and figure out who he truly was.

At that point, he said he went from football player “T.J. Duckett” to presenting as Todd J. Duckett.

“The same things I had been doing my whole entire life, the same circle I had been going around no longer served me anymore,” Duckett said. “But I didn’t realize that because of my depression, my sadness and because I didn’t want to let go of who I was because other people were holding on to this identity of me. I didn’t want to let them on. But not knowing the whole time, I was driving myself in a downward spiral, out of control. The whole time, I didn’t know who I was.”

From a 40-day water fast to learning to write left-handed, Duckett said he connected with his inner child, learning who he was before football and before his ego. He began a new life at 35 years old.

Photos by Don Campbell / HP staff

Former NFL player and mental health advocate Todd J. Duckett talks about the struggles and challenges throughout his own life during a presentation Wednesday at Lake Michigan College as part of Break the Stigma Mental Health Awareness Month.

“At the core of who I am, at the core of what I’m about, it all came down to giving and service,” he said. “It came down to ‘what could I give to other people? What could I do for others?’ Rather than ‘what could I do for me?’”

Just last month, his father died.

Duckett said his father was his hero, teaching him about love and life. He said the loss has challenged him to use the tools he teaches when he gives messages.

“I used to feel like that kid who was learning to ride a bike: the training wheels get kicked off and I felt like he was always back there holding onto my seat,” Duckett said. “And when he died, that was the first time I felt like he let go, not realizing he let go a long time ago. It was me that didn’t let go. Now, knowing that I am here to stand on my own, to lead my kids, to help y’all ... that has changed my whole purpose.”

Duckett presented three non-negotiable values, passed down from his father: excellence in identity, effort and response to challenges.

“If you keep working with yourself, if you keep growing with yourself, not only will you find the answers, not only will you have the impact that you truly want, but you’ll realize that life is about ups and downs,” he said. “Nobody is where they want to be. Everybody is striving to give their best effort.”

Rhi Cross works as a counselor in LMC’s student well-being and accessibility office. She was a student athlete at MSU at the same time Duckett was, and saw him again in September speaking at a Michigan Community College Association conference.

She said she wants students to learn about resilience, having a purpose, and about support networks as a tool for success.

“I have a special connection for athletes. I think as athletes we tend not to ask for help,” Cross said. “... Connecting with someone who’s trained in the tools we need, sometimes we need the support.”

This was the final presentation as part of LMC’s month of events geared toward breaking the stigma around mental health support and asking for help. Other events included a speaker from the B4 Foundation and a themed basketball game called “Slam Dunk to Stigma.”

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Sports

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Cassopolis outlasts Bridgman in double overtime district thriller

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES CHARTER TOWNSHIP — The Cassopolis boys basketball team prevailed Wednesday evening in a thriller that will be talked about for years to come.

The Rangers outlasted Bridgman 63-57 in a double-overtime, Division 3 district semifinal classic at Brandywine High School, rallying from a fourth quarter deficit. Jaylen Pratt led the Rangers with 15 points and Lucas Williams scored 14 points while Trevon Peterson-Evans and Jamiere Pratt scored 13 and 12 points respectively. Sam Feneche scored 23 points to lead Bridgman and Ethan Stine had 16 points.

The Rangers advance to face Brandywine at 7 p.m. Friday in the district championship game.

"It was tight the whole game," said Bridgman Head Coach Jeremy Ackerman. "Ethan Stine has experience in districts and for the rest, this was their first year being on varsity, so there was a lot of pressure. Cass is a good team and played hard all the way. I think both teams played hard all the way till the end. Just a couple missed shots, a missed box out for either team and you're gonna lose. Every possession was tough to even make passes the whole game, on both sides. It was a good basketball game."

[Stine's] a heck of a player; we had a lot of focus on him and hats off to him and their whole team," said Cassopolis Head Coach CJ Superczynski. "We wanted it; They got us last year when we were a little bit younger so our mission tonight was to make sure we got to Friday night, and I thought the guys fought their butts off. They did a great job."

See **THRILLER**, page B1

Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

Cassopolis' Trevon Peterson-Evans defends Bridgman's Sam Fenech during Wednesday's Division 3 district semifinal at Brandywine.

Photo provided

Dowagiac's Cinthia Villegas (28-3) and Bailey Ottinger (25-8) both finished second at 140 and 155 pounds to advance to the state finals.

Three wrestlers punch tickets to girls individual wrestling finals

PMG STAFF

PORTAGE — Three area girls wrestlers advanced at Sunday's Division 2 individual wrestling regionals at Portage Northern.

Dowagiac's Cinthia Villegas (28-3) and Bailey Ottinger (25-8) both finished second. Villegas had two pins before losing 8-2 to Evangeline Coutu of Plainwell in the 140-pound title match. And Ottinger collected two pins before being pinned herself by Portage Northern's Harleigh Toepfer in the 155-pound championship match.

Also advancing was Niles' Tess Brawley (29-10), who was fourth at 120 pounds.

The Individual State FInals are March 6 and 7 at Ford Field in Detroit.

100: Olivia McIntosh (Dowagiac) was p. by Riley Furrow (Hastings) :51; lost m.d. to Madison Chipman (Middleville Thornapple Kellogg) 10-1.

Bianca Martinez-Sandoval (Niles) drew bye; lost t.f. to Jahnavi Marion (Kalamazoo Central) 15-0; lost t.f. to Madison Chipman (Middleville Thornapple Kellogg) 17-0.

120: Arimani Wakefield (Dowagiac) was p. by Emmaline Kouw (Zeeland West) :22; was p. by Jayda Villareal (Hastings) 4:24.

Tess Brawley (Niles) drew bye; was p. by Isabel Marin-Hernandez (Bangor) 3:54; p. Jayda Villareal (Hastings) :51; (Third Place) was p. by Emmaline Kouw (Zeeland West) 2:51.

125: Brynn Mabry (Buchanana) was p. by Korrayah Kapenga (Hamilton) :52; was p. by Dalyn Bogard (Schoolcraft) 1:35.

140: Cinthia Villegas (Dowagiac) p. Kim Strobel (Plainwell) 4:59; p. Addison Gregory (Otsego) 1:58; (First Place) lost d. to Evangeline Coutu (Plainwell) 8-2.

145: Kadence Ashe (Buchanan) was p. by Gloria Uwamahoro (Wyoming Kelloggsville) 1:40; was p. by Madison Bailey (Zeeland East) 1:30.

155: Bailey Ottinger (Dowagiac) p. Martha Emil (Wyoming Kelloggsville) :44; p. EA Hartline (Hartford) 3:14; (First Place) was p. by Harleigh Toepfer (Portage Northern) 3:27

Photo provided

Niles' Tess Brawley (29-10) placed fourth at 120 pounds to advance to the state finals.

Dowagiac's Reyna reigns supreme at individual wrestling regionals

PMG STAFF

Dowagiac's Khalif Reyna dominated the 285-pound weight class Saturday at the Individual Regional Wrestling Championships at Belding.

Reyna (39-10) pinned Brock Linebaugh of Belding in the opening round, won an 11-3 major decision over Howard City Tri-County and then pinned Montague's Maverick Osborne in the championship match.

Reyna was the lone individual area champion.

Six other area wrestlers advanced to the State Individual Finals, scheduled for March 6 and 7 at Ford Field in Detroit. Joining Reyna in Division 3 were Dowagiac's Cameron White (37-8), second at 150, and Rooney Olmedo (45-6), third at 113. Also qualifying for state was Buchanan's Lucas Zeiger (41-4), third at 215.

In the Division 2 regional at Lowell, Edwardsburg's Gabriel Smith (26-3) and Niles' Chase Brawley (42-8) were third at 190 and 285, respectively. And in the Division 4 meet at Martin, Cassopolis' Elijah Wegoner (45-6) was second at 175.

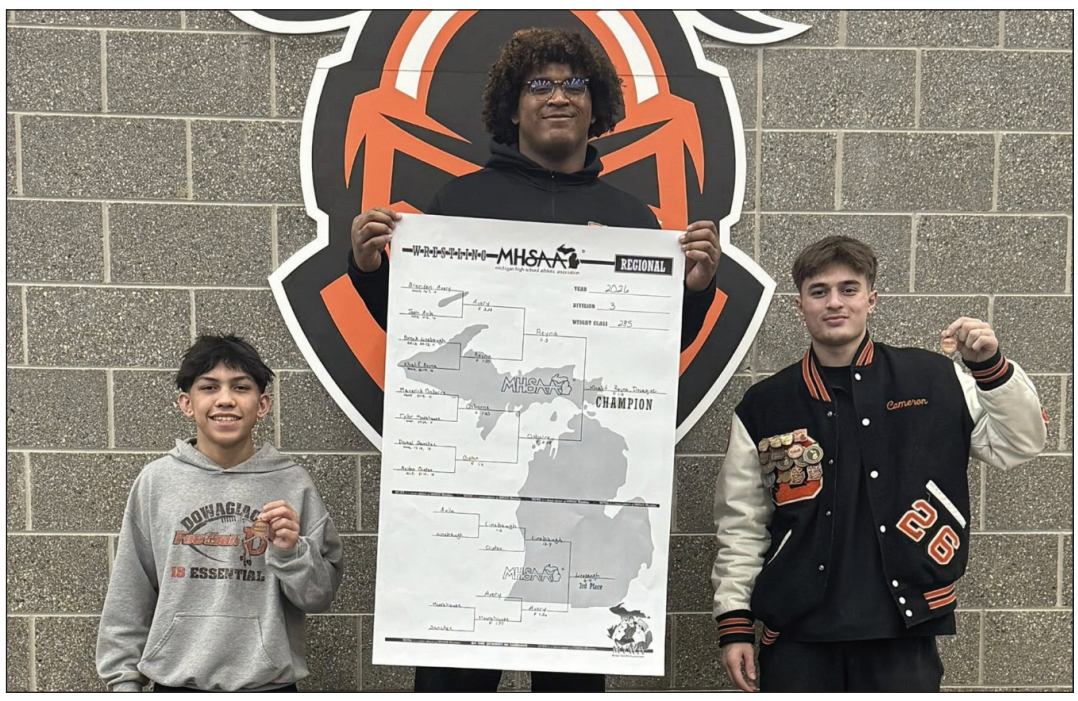

Photo provided

Dowagiac'ss Rooney Olmedo (left), Khalif Reyna (middle) and Cameron White (right) qualified for the Division 3 State Individual Finals, scheduled for March 6 and 7 at Ford Field in Detroit.

Division 2
At Lowell

138: William Turnbull (Niles) was p. by Cole Cichocki (Lowell) 3:28; d. Hayden Oman (Gull Lake) 5-3; lost d. to Austin Ulberg (Zeeland West) 1-0.

175: Cale Myers (Edwardsburg) lost t.f. to Tyler Block (Hamilton) 16-1; was p. by Zayne Zeeuw (Lowell) 2:49.

190: Gabriel Smith (Edwardsburg) m.d. over Andreas Valkema (Holland) 17-8; was p. by Jaxon Smith (Three Rivers) :53; p. Gunner Gale (Paw Paw) 2:29; (Third Place) m.d. over Andreras Valkema (Holland) 11-0.

285: Chase Brawley (Niles) p. Maximus Gomez (Zeeland East) :32; was p. by Caleb Pugh (Grand Rapids Christian) 1:59; m.d. over Collin Sahs (St. Joseph) 10-2; (Third Place) p. Braylen Meeuwsen (Lowell) 1:31.

Division 3
At Belding

106: Christopher Kern (Buchanan) was p. by Dylan Russo (Kent City) :49; lost d. to Kal Borden (Berrien Springs) 6-4.

113: Rooney Olmedo (Dowagiac) p. Antonio Santana (Grant) 4:45; was p. by Blake Wallace (Whitehall) 1:01; p. Aiden Poll (Howard City Tri-County) :53; (Third Place); m.d. over Antonio Santana (Grant) 13-1.

126: John Keser (Buchanan) was p. by Sammy Anderson (Kent City) 1:03; lost d. to Miles Ashcraft (Newaygo) 10-6.

132: Cooper Mabry (Buchanan) p. Travis Pike (Kent City) 3:44; lost d. to Isaac Gitchel (Howard City Tri-County) 10-5; lost t.f. to Brayden Peak (Central Montcalm) 15-0.

144: Jacob Villegas (Dowagiac) t.f. over Gavyn Maddox (Montague) 19-0; lost d. to Xander Antor (Howard City Tri-County) 13-11; was p. by Andrew Laperna (Grand Rapids West Catholic) 4:16.

150: Cameron White (Dowagiac) p. Victor Vazquez-Reyes (Kent City) 5:07; d. Fletcher Thommen (Montague) 13-9; (First Place) lost m.d. to Treydan Vanderkooi (Allegan) 12-3.

Weski Wesaw (Dowagiac) lost to Kolten Weller (Whitehall) 9-2; was p. by Hunter Gustinis (Kent City) :40.

165: Jeremiah Hargreaves (Dowagiac) lost t.f. to Tristan VanTimmeren (Howard City Tri-County) 17-0; was p. by Logan Thompson (Kent City) 4:00.

175: Brody Brewer (Dowagiac) lost t.f. to Jonze Geldhof (Comstock Park) 18-1; p. Brock Warren (Constantine) 1:49; lost d. to Ca'Mari Reese (Muskegon Orchard View) 5-4.

215: Lucas Zeiger (Buchanan) p. Kaden Smith (Grant) 5:44; lost d. to Trae Zerba (Central Montcalm) 8-2; p. Seth Potter (Fremont) 2:36; (Third Place) p. Billy Darke Jr. (Whitehall) :53.

Tyler Jansen (Dowagiac) lost m.d. to Bill Darke Jr. (Whitehall) 15-2; lost d. to Seth Potter (Fremont) 6-4.

285: Khalif Reyna (Dowagiac) p. Brock Linebaugh (Belding) 1:35; m.d. over Brenden Avery (Howard City Tri-County) 11-3; (First Place) p. Maverick Osborne (Montague) 1:10.

Division 4
At Martin

126: Cameron Westphal (Cassopolis) was p. by Reid Westfall (Reading) 3:27; m.d. over Lucadis Fonseca (Coloma) 20-6; was p. by Kaden Russell (Union City) 2:38.

138: Easton Mitchell (Cassopolis) lost d. to Mitchell Graham (Union City) 11-10; lost d. to Xavior Zinsmaster (Mendon) 12-5.

157: Conner Turnbow (Cassopolis) was p. by Jesse Fielis (White Pigeon) 5:37; m.d. over Max Young (Jonesville) 11-1; lost d. to Isaiah Waidelich (Union City) 10-4.

165: Alan Wegner (Cassopolis) was p. by Zak Iobe (Mendon) 5:43; lost d. to Jaden Zambrano (White Pigeon) 5-2.

175: Elijah Wegoner (Cassopolis) d. Darian Jacobs (Schoolcraft) 13-8; p. Parker Wiggins (Decatur) 2:32; (First Place) was p. by Gixxer Blair (Climax-Scotts) :28.

Berrien Springs beats Buchanan in D2 district opener

By MAXWELL HARDEN
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BERRIEN SPRINGS — The Berrien Springs boys basketball team emerged victorious from the opening round of Division 2 district play.

The Shamrocks (12-11) defeated Lakeland Conference foe Buchanan (12-9) 47-36 Monday night at Berrien Springs High School.

"I thought the intensity was right where it needed to be," said head coach Craig Blasko. "There were some peaks and valleys in the game and momentum shifted a few times, but that's basketball. They hit some big shots and we hit some big shots, so it was playoff basketball. I told the boys, they know us inside-out and we know them inside-out. I was really proud of our effort."

Darren O'Dell scored 14 points to lead the Shamrocks and Jeremi Belizare had nine points and Brady Blasko added seven. Ben Bosse led Buchanan with 11 points and Liam McBeth had 10 points while Preston Payne and Marley Hinds scored seven and six points respectively.

The Shamrocks led 20-12 at halftime.

"We were down eight at the half and I thought we had two transition baskets that we gave up, we had wide open lay-ups that we missed," said Buchanan Coach Reid McBeth. " I felt like we did what we needed to in the first half, we were where we needed to be. We controlled the tempo. I think both groups had some nerves there in that first half, and they showed. The outcome isn't what we wanted, but we battled hard the whole way."

A 10-3 Buchanan run to start the second half – capped by a Ben Bosse 3-pointer – trimmed Berrien Springs' lead to 23-22 with 1:30 remaining in the third. Leading 25-22 In the closing seconds of the quarter, Louis Rome scored on a drive to the basket to put the Shamrocks up 27-22. Berrien Springs then forced a Buchanan turnover which led to a Mapalo Chapi three-point play which gave the Shamrocks a 30-22 lead entering the fourth quarter.

Berrien Springs continued to hold the momentum early in the fourth quarter. A Kellen Blasko 3-pointer capped a 12-0 run to give the Shamrocks a 35-22 lead. The Bucks responded with a 11-4 run – highlighted by back-to-back Marley Hinds 3-pointers – to trim the deficit to 39-33 before the Shamrocks closed the game out.

See **OPENER**, page B1

ROUNDUP

Monday

PLAINWELL 53, EDWARDSBURG 44

Plainwell pulled away from Edwardsburg in the fourth quarter to post a 53-44 girls basketball victory Monday.

The Eddies (6-14) were down just three in the final period before the hosts hit free throws to take control.

Shelby Laubach scored 24 points to go with three rebounds, six steals and three assists. Kya Shier added 11 points and four steals. Liyah Worthington had six rebounds.

Thursday

PLAINWELL 41, EDWARDSBURG 32

Plainwell held off Edwardsburg 41-32, sending the Eddies to their ninth straight loss.

Edwardsburg trailed just 37-32 with two minutes to go, but could get no closer.

Shelby Laubach had 12 points, five rebounds and five steals for the Eddies, now 6-15. Kya Shier added nine points, seven rebounds, three assists and two steals. Liyah Worthington and Mallory Schrock each finished with four rebounds.

LAWTON 56, DOWAGIAC 40

Dowagiac fell to 8-11 with a 56-40 loss at Lawton.

Marlie Carpenter scored nine points and Claire Hess eight for the Chieftains.

Friday, Feb. 20
Boys

BRANDYWINE 62, DOWAGIAC 24

At Brandywine
Dowagiac (24)
D.J. Shivers 5, A.J. Nichens 2, Jackson Gillesby 2, Caiden Freeman 5, Riley McCaffery 3, John Breland 4, Jamere Bacon 3. Totals 10 2-11 24.
Brandywine (62)
Nylen Goins 23, Emerson Gogley 13, Elijhia Burt 4, Will Hubbard 2, Parker Anglin 2, Ryder Richard 14, Mason Michilin 2, Tyler Schoff 2. Totals 24 6-11 62.

Dowagiac	**5**	**14**	**15**	**24**
Brandywine	**31**	**50**	**58**	**62**

3-point baskets – Dowagiac 2 (Bacon 1, Shiurs 1), Brandywine 8 (Goins 4, Gogley 2, Richard 2). Total fouls – Dowagiac 8, Brandywine 11. Records – Dowagiac 3-16 (0-6 Lakeland Conference), Brandywine 17-5 (5-1 Lakeland Conference).

NILES 74, PLAINWELL 36

At Niles
Plainwell (36)
Chibueze Amaezechi 8, Reece Trahan 4, Nate Launt 5, Trason Stephenson 4, Gibson Youngs 2, Luke Filkins 2, Tyarion Johnson 3, T. Vandersteit 8. Totals 13 5-8 36.
Niles (74)
Brayden Favors 13, Acie Kirtdoll 4, Brenden Olsen 17, Jarico Sisk 2, Derrick Hill Jr. 20, Ian Riggenbach 2, Ceon Kirtdoll 3, Brace Young 1, Donny Williams 12. Totals 30 5-8 74.

Plainwell	**5**	**14**	**22**	**36**
Niles	**16**	**35**	**54**	**74**

3-point baskets – Plainwell 5 (Vandersteit 2, Johnson 1, Launt 1, Stephenson 1), Niles 9 (Hill Jr. 4, Williams 2, Favors 1, Olsen 1, C. Kirtdoll 1). Total fouls (fouled out) – 9 Plainwell 10 (Launt), Niles 7. Records – Plainwell 12-10 (8-6 Wolverine Conference), Niles 16-6 (11-3 Wolverine Conference).

EDWARDSBURG 66, VICKSBURG 49

At Edwardsburg
Vicksburg (49)
Graham Kubiak 6. Mitchell Beyer 10, R. Marchese 9, Anthony Marchese 2, Caden Chisholm 13, Nathan Vallier 1, Yant 1, Buikema 3, Peyton Hudgins 4. Totals 16 13-24 49.
Edwardsburg (66)
Maverick Gates 14, Liam Sieggreen 7, Blaise Crist 16, Law Gates 3, Michael Wright 0, Reed Gates 26. Totals 22 17-27 66.

Vicksburg	**10**	**25**	**40**	**49**
Edwardsburg	**13**	**31**	**47**	**66**

3-point baskets – Vicksburg 4 (Kubiak 2, Beyer 1, Chisholm 1), Edwardsburg 5 (Sieggreen 2, M. Gates 2, L. Gates 1). Total fouls (fouled out) – Vicksburg 20 (Kubiak), Edwardsburg 17. Records – Vicksburg 10-12 (7-7 Wolverine Conference), Edwardsburg 14-8 (9-5 Wolverine Conference).

Girls

PLAINWELL 49, NILES 42

At Niles
Plainwell (49)
Alyssa Weldon 23, Tessie Kiel 5, Alayna Ranney 8, Kaylee VanAtter 7, Anna Overway 6. Totals 16 11-17 49.
Niles (42)
Jessie Thornton 13, Tanaya Brown 3, Maddie Zache 2 Gianna Ball 0, Elynne Hoyt 16, Ali Gerrits 8. Totals 15 10-13 42.

Plainwell	**15**	**28**	**40**	**49**
Niles	**6**	**15**	**27**	**42**

3-point baskets – Plainwell 6 (Weldon 4, Ranney 2), Niles 2 (Hoyt 1, Thornton 1). Total fouls (fouled out) – Plainwell 13 (VanAtter), Niles 14. Records – Plainwell 14-5 (8-4 Wolverine Conference), Niles 11-9 (6-6 Wolverine Conference).

Saturday, Feb. 21
Girls

BRANDYWINE 56, KALAMAZOO CENTRAL 38

Kalamazoo Central (38)
J. Blanks 14, Yazmyne Morales 10, Murphy 3, Taelyn Stiver-Brooks 2, Clay 2, De'Niyah Colbert 5, Mariah Blanks 2. Totals 15 6-12 38.
Brandywine (56)
Karleigh Byrd 8, Zaya Price 17, Mackenna Price 11, Lily Gill 16, Brook Brumitt 4. Totals 19 16-27 56.

K. Central	**8**	**16**	**22**	**38**
Brandywine	**12**	**32**	**37**	**56**

3-point baskets – Kalamazoo Central 2 (Morales 2), Brandywine 2 (Byrd 2). Total fouls (fouled out) – Kalamazoo Central 20 (Murphy), Brandywine 11. Records – Kalamazoo Central 12-7, Brandywine 20-1

Tuesday, Feb. 24

BRANDYWINE 62, KALAMAZOO LOY NORRIX 33

At Loy Norrix
Brandywine (62)
Macy Pellow 2, Karleigh Byrd 12, Zaya Price 18, Mackenna Price 9, Lily Gill 12, Brook Brumitt 9. Totals 25 7-13 62.
Kalamazoo Loy Norrix (33)
Jaela Moncrief 7, Jordyn Ivy 8, Jurdynn Fowlkes 8, Lea Harnson 1, KyMora Buchanan 5. Totals 13 4-7 33.

Brandywine	**25**	**47**	**62**	**62**
Loy Norrix	**5**	**19**	**22**	**33**

3-point baskets – Brandywine 5 (Byrd 2, Brumitt 1, M. Price 1, Gill 1), Kalamazoo Loy Norrix 3 (Fowlkes 2, Moncrief 1). Total fouls – Brandywine 6, Kalamazoo Loy Norrix 15. Records – Brandywine 21-1, Kalamazoo Loy Norrix 5-15

Niles' Thornton surpasses 1,000-point milestone

PMG STAFF

THREE RIVERS — Jessie Thornton became just the sixth Niles girls basketball player to top the 1,000-point plateau Wednesday night.

Unfortunately it wasn't enough to give the Vikings a victory.

Three Rivers held off Niles 57-55 in overtime, spoiling Thornton's milestone night.

Thornton scored 22 points, including a reverse layup at the regulation buzzer to tie the game at 50-50 and send it overtime. Unfortunately in the extra period, Niles missed three of four free throw opportunities while Three Rivers cashed in on five of seven and that was the difference.

The Vikings, who fell to 6-7 in the Wolverine Conference and 11-10 overall, also got 16 points from Elynne Hoyt and 12 from Tamaya Brown.

Three Rivers 71, Niles 68 (2 OT)

Another night of frustration for Niles' girls basketball team.

The Vikings let an 11-point halftime lead slip away as Three Rivers pulled out a 71-68 victory in double overtime. Three Rivers had beaten Niles 57-55 in one overtime Wednesday.

Dani Glass scored 14 of her 42 points in the two overtime periods for Three Rivers.

Niles, which finished 11-11 overall and 6-8 in the Wolverine Conference, got 19 points from Tanaya Brown, 18 from Elynne Hoyt, 16 from Jessie Thornton and 10 from Ali Gerrits.

Niles career 1,000-point scorers

- Alycia Patterson (2016-2020) 1,216
- Sarah Dreher (2003-05) 1,205
- Brandie Radde (2002-05) 1,164
- Nichole Sly (2007-11) 1,078
- Timothea Clemmer (1989-91) 1,078
- Jessie Thornton (2022-26) 1,021

Photo provided

Niles' Jessie Thornton poses for a photo with her teammates after surpassing 1,000 points Wednesday night.

Brandywine rolls to 65-38 win over Coloma in D3 district semis

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES CHARTER TOWNSHIP — Host Brandywine gave the home crowd plenty to cheer about Wednesday night.

The Bobcats (17-5) opened Division 3 district play with a 65-38 win over Coloma (10-12) in the semifinals. Coloma scored the game's first basket and the Bobcats used an 11-0 run to swing momentum in its favor. Brandywine then scored the final 11 points of the second quarter to make it 32-14 at halftime.

The margin never got closer than 17 in the second half.

"I thought the kids played real hard tonight, I was happy with them," said Brandywine Head Coach Nathan Knapp. "We've been starting to click a little bit and understand 32 minutes. We've been tough all season, but we have our lapses and we're starting to win the second quarter but Ryder went down with the two fouls and we were trying to protect him. Kids came off the bench and stepped up real well… we talk about not getting outworked and trying to impose our will and they did a good job of that tonight. We had hustle plays all night long. It was some of the little things that the kids did that showed up."

Coloma's Zavier Pompey led all scorers with 18 points and AJ Moore added 10. Five Bobcats reached double figures in scoring, led by Elijhia Burt's 14. Nylen Goins scored 13 points and Ryder Richard had 13 points and six rebounds while Will Hubbard added 12 points and seven rebounds.

"The kids out there on the floor sold out tonight for each other," Knapp said. "Every kid that was out there, they care. Will played good, Nylen had an off night but he kept being strong. Elijhia Burt had hustle plays and Parker Anglin stepped up big and did a lot of good things. The kids played hard and everyone stepped up."

The Bobcats have won two of the last three district titles and hope to make it three in four years at 7 p.m. Friday against Cassopolis.

"The biggest thing we've been talking about all season is outworking our opponent," Knapp said. "We gotta take care of that part. We gotta eliminate turnovers, we gotta attack the basket, we gotta knock down shots. We'll just keep working at it every day. For us to hold up the trophy Friday, we're gonna have to play 32 minutes."

Tanya Hagen / For Leader Publications

Elijhia Burt handles the ball during Wednesday's D3 district semifinal against Coloma.

Cassopolis' Bowsher surpasses 1,000 points

PMG STAFF

CASSOPOLIS — Ryley Bowsher became the fifth player in Cassopolis girls basketball history to top the 1,000-point plateau Tuesday.

Bowsher scored 21 points as the Rangers earned a 51-32 victory over White Pigeon.

Bowsher hit six of Cassopolis' 10 3-pointers and Madison Nelson scored seven of her 12 points in the fourth quarter as the Rangers outscored White Pigeon 17-2 to break the game open.

Cassopolis clinches share of Southwest 10 title

Madalynn Yakel and Madison Nelson combined to help Cassopolis claim the Southwest 10 girls basketball title Thursday night.

Yakel scored nine of her 13 points and Nelson all 11 of hers in the first half as the Rangers raced out to a 27-17 halftime lead and coasted past Marcellus 51-28.

Cass finished 16-2 in the league and shared the crown with Centreville.

Ryley Bowsher added nine points for the Rangers, now 16-6 overall.

Cassopolis 1,000-point scorers

- Bridgitte Mourning (1978-81) 1,452
- Billie Goins (1974-77) 1,296
- Santaja Gibson (2015-18) 1,261
- Jealyn Foston (2001-04) 1,124
- Ryley Bowsher (2022-26) 1,026

File photo

Ryley Bowsher is now the fifth player in Cassopolis girls basketball history to score 1,000 career points.

OPENER

From page B2

"We switched up defenses a little bit and they switched up theirs, which we kind of expected," Blasko said. "We've got some good ball handlers, and we've got a good variety of players, some ball handlers and shooters. We stayed aggressive and we got some breaks that went our way."

"We had an unfortunate series of events," McBeth said. "They had the break away and then we turned the ball right back over and it seems like, all year, we've had a 20 second hiccup where we do that and our margin for error all year has been slim. Unfortunately. In the end, those hiccups were too much to overcome for us, and it's not because of a lack of effort or heart from these guys. They give it their all, and I'm proud of them and proud of the season they had and all they've done for our basketball program."

Blasko liked what he saw from Brady and Rome as well as his contingent of underclassmen.

"Brady did a nice job of controlling the pace, taking care of the ball and creating," he said. "Kellen played some good basketball, got some shots and some free throws. Louis Rome always has lots of good energy for us and made some free throws. Map Chapi came off the bench and provided us with good minutes. He's just a sophomore, so it was good to see our young guys out there. Map's a sophomore, Braelin's a sophomore and Kellen's a freshman – those three were out there for a good stretch.

"It's a good thing I'm bald, because they make me want to pull out my hair sometimes but they did a good job. I was proud of them."

For McBeth, the loss meant saying goodbye to a nine-member senior class that he has coached since they were in elementary school.

"I told them since they were in third grade, and we were in the gym working out, or every Sunday, we'd go across Northern Indiana, playing these Holy Cross leagues, all of that was trying to prepare them for situations like tonight," McBeth said. "It wasn't for a lack of knowing what to do that we came up short. It wasn't for a lack of effort; Berrien hit some shots and some things didn't go our way. There are a lot of basketball teams that come and go but you're not going to find a team that's more of a family than that group. They really do care about each other. There's never a time in practice where you don't see one guy joke with another guy.

"I'm sure there's a lot of tears in there, but it's because they cared about each other and that's how it should be. I appreciate all they've done."

The loss also meant that Monday's game was his son Liam's last in a Bucks uniform. McBeth embraced a tearful Liam as the duo walked off the court together for the last time as player and coach.

"I think so many times, people sitting in the stands don't know the hours that are put in or maybe the arguments that go on in the gym late at night or at two in the morning. Liam and I have certainly had our share of those but we both knew it was to make him the best basketball player he could be," McBeth said. "Whether it was Tuesday night or Friday night, there's not a lot I have to say to him on the court anymore. He's become like what you want as a floor leader and he was certainly the heart and soul of our team, and an extension of our coaching staff. I couldn't be more proud of him.

"It's tough because when they're little, you know that someday, it's gonna come to an end. And when it does, it's hard; I don't even know how to describe it… I care about all of them. It's tough, I could hardly get a pregame speech in. It's just an emotional time because that's when Liam and I spent the most amount of time together but this is really about the team. Liam knows how much I appreciate him and I think they all know how much we appreciate them."

Berrien Springs advances to face Benton Harbor (19-3) at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday at Berrien Springs. The Shamrocks lost their lone matchup against the Tigers, a 69-66 overtime setback on Dec. 30, that went down to the wire.

"They're obviously a really good team," Blasko said. "They've got a great record, they play tough competition. We played them earlier in the year and played well against him and had a chance to win but that was over a month ago. They're a different team, we're a different team and it's playoff basketball. You just gotta come and bring it every night. Like I told the boys, you only need to win by one and just be the best team that night."

THRILLER

From page B2

Trailing 49-43 with less than one minute remaining, a Jamiere Pratt 3-pointer trimmed the Bees' lead to three. After Stine split a pair of free throws to put Bridgman up 50-46 with 22 seconds remaining, Jaylen Pratt hit a 3-pointer to make it a 50-49 game.

With 11 seconds left in regulation and his team trailing 51-49 after Stine split another pair of free throws, Williams hit a running lay-up before time expired to tie the game at 51 and force overtime.

"It's crazy and it sounds cliche, but I'm telling our guys [Bridgman's] gonna miss this free throw and we're gonna get the ball, we're gonna hit a three, we're gonna call timeout and we're gonna press," Superczynski said. "It worked out just like I said. They missed another free throw, we got it back and all of a sudden, we're only down two and we were setting up to go for the win. My point guard, [Williams], read the defense. They kind of pressed us a little bit. We got open and he just went hard to the basket and finished it."

In the first overtime, the Rangers built on their momentum. A Peterson-Evans 3-pointer and a Williams basket capped a 12-2 run to put Cassopolis up 56-51. The Bees responded, with a Fenech basket and a Joshua Russell 3-pointer tying the game at 56-56 and sending the game into double overtime.

In the final frame, a Jaylen Pratt floater put Cassopolis up for good at 58-56. The rest of the stanza was decided at the free throw line, with Williams making 4 of 6 from the line and Aaron Buck-Hooper scoring the game's final point.

Cassopolis converted 9 of 17 free throws, including 5 of 8 in the second overtime. Bridgman finished 11 of 21 from the stripe, including 1 of 6 in the first and second overtimes combined.

"Cass made free throws at the end," Ackerrman said. "They deserved to win because they made their free throws when we had to foul to ice the game. If they would have missed free throws, we had a chance to win or have another overtime. Credit to Cass, it's good for them and they'll have a good game against Brandywine on Friday."

The game was a back-and-forth affair throughout, with neither team willing to let the other pull away. Bridgman led by as many as nine in the first half and led 26-22 at halftime. Superczynski said the Rangers' 47-43 win over Comstock to clinch the Southwest 10 Conference prepared them for a game like Wednesday's.

"We just played a gritty game for the conference championship on Friday night, so we kind of already have been here where we knew we had to make the free throws down the stretch," Superczynski said. "We've been working on it and we were ready to play."

Bridgman's season ended with a 15-7 record. Ackerman was proud of the way his first-year varsity players acclimated to the level. Stine cemented himself among Bridgman's basketball greats, scoring more than 400 points this season and becoming the eighth Bee to eclipse the 1,000-point plateau.

"I think we had a great season," he said. "We had new guys getting to play on varsity. Ethan had a great season; he got a lot of shots and we ran a lot of offenses through him and everyone bought in and played as a team. We had no team dissension and everyone was at practice working hard up until the very end of the season. Sad to see it end."

With the semifinals in the rear-view, Superczynski looks forward to Friday's matchup with the Bobcats.

"They're a great team. We know that," Superczynski said. "We've got to stop in [Nylen Goins] and the big guy down low. But we're crosstown rivals, so it's not going to be so much of a home court advantage for them because we'll be out here. We're ready for them."

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STATE OF MICHIGAN
43rd CIRCUIT COURT

ORDER FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION/POSTING AND NOTICE OF ACTION

CASE NO. 2026-000032-CZ

PLAINTIFF'S NAME:
Edwardsburg Estates MHC, LLC
C/O-Plaintiff's Attorney

PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY:
The Law Offices of Aaron D. Cox, PLLC
By: Aaron D. Cox (P69346)
/Elizabeth E. Ellison (P82098)
23820 Eureka Road Taylor, MI 48180
Phone: 734-287-3664

V.

DEFENDANTS:
The Unknown Heirs, Devisees, and Assigns of Albert Watchorn

TO THE ABOVE NAMED-DEFENDANTS IT IS ORDERED:

1.You are being sued in his court by the plaintiff to terminate ownership interests in the 1985 Skyline Park Manufactured Home (VIN MI5388R131V092625) and declare manufactured home abandoned. You must file your answer or take other action permitted by law in this court at the court address above on or before 28 days from the date of last service. If you fail to do so, a default judgment may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint filed in this case.

2. A copy of this order shall be published once each week in THE DOWAGIAC DAILY NEWS (LEADER PUBLICATIONS) for three consecutive weeks, and proof of publication shall be filed in this court.

3. shall post a copy of this order in the courthouse, and at 69425 M-62, site # 26, Edwardsburg, Michigan 49112 (Site of Manufactured Home).

4. A copy of this order shall be sent to THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANTS at the last-known address by registered mail, return receipt requested, before the date of last publication, and the affidavit of mailing shall be filed with this court.

Hon. Mark A. Herman (P34735)
JUDGE
DATE 01/30/2026

THE TOWNSHIP OF CALVIN
FRANCHISE GRANTED TO
SEMCO Energy Gas Company

Ordinance No. ORD 2026-02

An Ordinance, granting to SEMCO Energy Gas Company, a Michigan corporation, its successors and assigns, the right, power and authority to lay, maintain and operate gas mains, pipes and services on, along, across and under the highways, streets, alleys, bridges, waterways, and other public places, and to conduct a local gas business in the Township of Calvin, located in Cass County, Michigan, for a period of thirty years.

THE TOWNSHIP OF CALVIN ORDAINS:

Section 1. GRANT OF FRANCHISE. The Township of Calvin, located in Cass County, Michigan (the "Township"), hereby grants to SEMCO Energy Gas Company, a division of SEMCO Energy, Inc., a Michigan corporation, its successors and assigns, (the "Grantee") the right, power and authority to construct, lay, operate, maintain and replace in the public streets, highways, alleys and other public places in the Township of Calvin, Michigan, all needful and proper gas pipes, mains, conductors, service pipes and other apparatus and facilities requisite for the manufacture, transmission and distribution of gas for all purposes to the Township of Calvin, and the inhabitants thereof, and for conducting gas elsewhere to supply neighboring cities, villages and other territories supplied with gas by said Grantee, for a period of thirty years.

Section 2. CONSIDERATION. In consideration of the rights, power and authority hereby granted, Grantee shall faithfully perform all things required by the terms hereof.

Section 3. CONDITIONS. No highway, street, alley, bridge or other public place used by Grantee shall be obstructed longer than necessary during the work of construction or repair, and shall be restored to as good order and condition as when Grantee commenced the work. All of Grantee's pipes and mains shall be so placed in the highways and other public places as not to unnecessarily interfere with the use thereof for highway purposes. Grantee will use its best efforts to not unreasonably interfere with or disrupt any public utility apparatus or facilities operated by the Township and, to the extent Grantee interferes with or disrupts any such public utility apparatus or facilities, Grantee shall restore such apparatus or facilities to as good order and condition as when Grantee commenced work.

Section 4. HOLD HARMLESS. Grantee shall at all times keep and save the Township free and harmless from all loss, costs and expense to which it may be subject by reason of the Grantee's negligent construction and negligent maintenance of the structures and equipment hereby authorized. If any action is commenced against the Township resulting from Grantee's negligent construction and maintenance, Grantee shall, upon notice, defend the Township and save it free and harmless fom all loss, cost and damage arising out of such negligent construction and maintenance.

Section 5. FRANCHISE NOT EXCLUSIVE. The rights, power and authority herein granted, are not exclusive. Either manufactured or natural gas may be furnished hereunder.

Section 6. RA TES. Grantee shall charge for gas furnished the rates, charges and special taxes as approved from time to time by the Michigan Public Service Commission, or its successors having authority and jurisdiction to fix and regulate gas rates and charges, or as otherwise permitted or required by applicable law or tariff, for the term of this franchise. Such rates shall be subject to Commission review and change at any time upon petition therefore being made by either said Township, acting by its Township Board, or by said Grantee.

Section 7. REVOCATION. The franchise granted by this ordinance is subject to revocation upon sixty (60) days written notice by the party desiring such revocation.

Section 8. MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION JURISDICTION. Grantee shall, as to all other conditions and elements of service not herein fixed, be and remain subject to the reasonable rules and regulations of the Michigan Public Service Commission or its successors, applicable to gas service in said Township and shall provide service in accordance with the terms and conditions set fot1h in its applicable tariff as approved from time to time by the Michigan Public Service Commission or its successors.

Section 9. SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS. The words "SEMCO Energy Gas Company" and "SEMCO Energy, Inc.," wherever used herein, are intended and shall be held and construed to mean and include SEMCO Energy Gas Company and its parent, subsidiaries, successors, affiliates, and assigns, whether so expressed or not. The word "Grantee," wherever used herein, is intended and shall be held and construed to mean and include SEMCO Energy Gas Company, SEMCO Energy, Inc., and the successors and assigns of each, whether so expressed or not. Grantee may assign the rights and obligations under this agreement as long as the Grantee provides prior written notice to the Township of any such assignment.

Section 10. FORCE MAJEURE. The Grantee shall not be liable for failure to furnish service as herein provided, or for any breach of the Grantee's obligations hereunder, if such failure or breach is caused by acts of God, labor troubles, riot, or any other causes or contingencies not reasonably within the control of the Grantee.

Section 11. VACATION OR RELOCATION. The Township may require the Grantee to vacate or relocate any pottion of Grantee's facilities at the Grantee's expense if such vacation or relocation is necessary to secure the public health and welfare or is otherwise required by Grantor in the exercise of a governmental function.

Section 12. COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS. Grantee shall comply with all laws, statutes, ordinances, rules and regulations regarding the installation, construction, ownership or use of its facilities, whether federal, state, or local.

Section 13. EFFECTIVE DATE. Upon adoption, the Township Clerk shall deliver to Grantee a certified copy of this ordinance. Additionally, the Township shall publish this ordinance within thirty (30) days of its adoption and this ordinance shall take effect upon the day after the date of publication thereof, continuing for a term of thirty (30) years from that date; provided, however, it shall cease and be of no effect after sixty (60) days from its adoption unless within said period the Grantee shall accept the same in writing filed with the Township Clerk.

Upon acceptance and publication hereof, the ordinance shall constitute a contract between said Township and said Grantee.

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Date Passed: 2-10-26

Attested, by Order of the Township of
Calvin, Cass County, Michigan

Michelle Anderson
Calvin Township Clerk

Adrienne Glover
Calvin Township Supervisor

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned, being the duly qualified and acting Clerk of Calvin Township, Cass County, Michigan, hereby certifies that: (1) the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Township Board at a regular meeting held on the 10th day of February, 2026, at which meeting a quorum was present and remained throughout, (2) the original hereof is on file in the records in my office, (3) the meeting was conducted, and public notice thereof was given, pursuant to and in full compliance with the Open Meetings Act (Act No. 267, Public Acts of Michigan, 1976, as amended) and, (4) minutes of such meeting were kept and will be or have been made available as required thereby.

Dated: Feb. 10, 2026

Michelle Anderson
Calvin Township Clerk

WAYNE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF REVIEW MEETING 2026 Wayne Township Board of Review will hear assessment appeals at the Township Hall 53950 Glenwood Road

Tuesday March 3rd' 2026, 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM, Organizational meeting. No appeals
Monday March 9th, 2026, 2:00P. to 5:00P. & 6:00P. to 9:00P.
Friday March 13th, 2026, 9:00A. To 12:00 Noon & 1:00P. to 4:00P.

Residents & Non-Residents may send letters of protest to the Board of Review, and all letters must be received by March 13th, 2026

Tentative	Ratio %	Factor
Agriculture	47.04	1.0629
Commercial	46.13	1.0839
Industrial	48.13	1.0389
Residential	48.12	1.0391
Personal	50.00	1.0000

Assessments have been adjusted to result in an anticipated multiplier of 1.0000 for each class. With proposal A in effect the Taxable Values, excluding new construction and ownership transfers, are capped at the rate of inflation, 2.7%.

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF HOWARD CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE OF BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING TO: RESIDENTS OF HOWARD TOWNSHIP AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE the Howard Township Board of Trustees will hold a public hearing on the proposed Township Budgets for fiscal year 2026-2027 at the Howard Township Business Office, 1345 Barron Lake Road, Niles, Michigan, 49120 on March 12, 2026, at 6:00pm. **The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing.** A copy of the budget is available for public inspection at the Township Office, 1345 Barron Lake Road, Niles, MI. This notice is posted in compliance with PA 267 of 1976 as amended (Open Meetings Act), MCLA 41 .72a (2)(3) and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Howard Township Board will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon four day's notice to the Howard Township Board. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Howard Township Board by writing or calling the following:

Howard Township Office 1345 Barron Lake Road Niles, MI 49120
269-684-0072 Ask for: Bill Kasprzak, Supervisor or Sheri Wozniak, Clerk

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FORECLOSURE NOTICE Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, March 18, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Robert A. Puza, Single to Fifth Third Bank National Association f/k/a Fifth Third Bank, Mortgagee, dated March 25, 2019, and recorded on April 17, 2019, in Liber 1153, Page 1631, Cass County Records, , on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Eighteen Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy-Four and 32/100 ($18,874.32) including interest at the rate of 5.49000% per annum. Said premises are situated in the Township of LaGrange, Cass County, Michigan, and are described as: Lots 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131 and 132, Kelsey Lake Terrace, according to the recorded plat thereof in Liber 1 of Plats Page 170 in Register of Deeds of Cass County, Michigan. Commonly known as: 56896 SUNNYSIDE AVE, CASSOPOLIS, MI 49031 If the property is eventually sold at foreclosure sale, the redemption period will be 6.00 months from the date of sale unless the property is abandoned or used for agricultural purposes. If the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241 and/or 600.3241a, the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of sale, or 15 days after statutory notice, whichever is later. If the property is presumed to be used for agricultural purposes prior to the date of the foreclosure sale pursuant to MCL 600.3240, the redemption period is 1 year. Pursuant to MCL 600.3278, if the property is sold at a foreclosure sale, the borrower(s) will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. TO ALL PURCHASERS: The foreclosing mortgagee can rescind the sale. In that event, your damages are, if any, limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest. Dated: February 14, 2026, Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C. Attorneys for Fifth Third Bank National Association f/k/a Fifth Third Bank 43252 Woodward Avenue, Suite 180, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302, (248) 335-9200 Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Case No. 25MI00945-1
(02-14)(03-07)

FORECLOSURE NOTICE Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, March 11, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Jamal B. Smith to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. as Mortgagee, as Nominee for Ruoff Mortgage Company, Inc, its successors, and assigns, Mortgagee, dated December 7, 2020, and recorded on January 12, 2021, in Liber 1188, Page 32, Cass County Records, said mortgage was assigned to Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC by an Assignment of Mortgage dated January 12, 2026 and recorded January 20, 2026 in Liber 1271, Page 975, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of One Hundred Thirty-Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty-Six and 06/100 ($137,886.06) including interest at the rate of 3.37500% per annum. Said premises are situated in the Township of SILVERCREEK, Cass County, Michigan, and are described as: Unit 19 in Indian Lake Woods Condominium, according to the Master Deed thereof, as recorded in Liber 847, Page 137, Cass County Records, and any amendments thereto and designated as Cass County Condominium Subdivision Plan No. 12, together with rights in general common elements and limited common elements as set forth in said Master Deed and as described in Act 59 of the Public Acts of 1978, as amended. Commonly known as: 33602 SASSAFRAS LN, EAU CLAIRE, MI 49111 If the property is eventually sold at foreclosure sale, the redemption period will be 6.00 months from the date of sale unless the property is abandoned or used for agricultural purposes. If the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241 and/or 600.3241a, the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of sale, or 15 days after statutory notice, whichever is later. If the property is presumed to be used for agricultural purposes prior to the date of the foreclosure sale pursuant to MCL 600.3240, the redemption period is 1 year. Pursuant to MCL 600.3278, if the property is sold at a foreclosure sale, the borrower(s) will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. TO ALL PURCHASERS: The foreclosing mortgagee can rescind the sale. In that event, your damages are, if any, limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest. Dated: February 7, 2026, Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C. Attorneys for Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC 43252 Woodward Avenue, Suite 180, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302, (248) 335-9200 Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Case No. 25MI00745-1 (02-07)(02-28)

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on March 18, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Blake M. Anderson and Madeline G. Gordon
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Freedom Mortgage Corporation
Date of Mortgage: February 24, 2023
Date of Mortgage Recording: February 27, 2023
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $259,966.58
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Village of Vandalia, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: The South 1/2 of the following described parcel: Commencing 13.43 chains North of the East 1/4 post of Section 27, Town 6 South, Range 14 West; thence North on Section line 3.03 chains; thence West 3.29 chains; thence South along Mill Race to point West of beginning; thence East to beginning.
ALSO, The North 1/2 of the following described parcel: Commencing 13.43 chains North of the East 1/4
post of Section 27, Town 6 South, Range 14 West; thence North on Section line 3.03 chains; thence West 3.29 chains; thence South along Mill Race to point West of beginning; thence East to beginning.
Common street address (if any): 60312 N Main St, Vandalia, MI 49095-9505
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: February 14, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515 1584318 (02-14)(03-07)

0900 LEGALS

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF Berrien

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

CASE NO. and JUDGE
2026-0111-DE-J
Hon. Paul S. Jancha

Estate of: Phillip Alan Sutton
Date of birth: 02/21/1946

TO ALL CREDITORS: *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Phillip Alan Sutton, died 001/15/2026. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Kathryn E. Smith, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 811 Port St. St. Joseph, MI 49085 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date 02/25/2026

Heidi A. Duncan P76168
Attorney name Bar no.
107 Pennsylvania Ave
Address
Dowagiac, MI 49047
City, State, Zip
269-782-9895
Telephone no.

Kathryn E. Smith
Personal representative
16279 Merson Court
Address
Buchanan, MI 49107
City, state, zip
269-676-8195
Telephone

0900 LEGALS

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF Cass

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

Case No.
2026-035-DE

Estate of:
Madelyn Dian Brooks
Date of birth: 09/25/1946

TO ALL CREDITORS: *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Madelyn Dian Brooks, died 12/02/2025. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to, Debra Brenner, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 6096 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49031 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date 02/20/2026

Peter W. Smith P22999
Attorney name Bar no.
423 Sycamore St., Ste 102, PO Box 67
Address
Niles, MI 49120
City, State, Zip
269-683-3300
Telephone no.

Debra Brenner
Personal representative
748 Maple Street
Address
Niles, MI 49120
City, state, zip

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF Cass

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

CASE NO. and JUDGE
2026-018-DE
Honorable Carol M. Bealor

Court Address
60296 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49031
Telephone no.
269-445-4454

Estate of: Debra Lynn Steele
Date of birth: 01/23/1951

TO ALL CREDITORS: **

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, Debra Lynn Steele died 12/28/2025. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to, Jamie L. Fizer, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 60296 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49031 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date 02/23/2026

Elizabeth L. McCree P76926
Attorney Bar no.
717 St Joseph Dr. #151
Address
St Joseph, MI 49085
City, state, zip
269-873-0208
Telephone

Jamie L. Fizer
Personal Representative
2404 County Road 3711
Address
Athens, TX 75752
City, State, Zip
(903)920-2481
Telephone no.

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
CASS COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

CASE NO. and JUDGE
2026-040-DE

Court address Court telephone no.
60296 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49301 (269) 445-4452

Estate of: Nancy Jean Anderson, Deceased
Date of Birth: * 01/11/1955

TO ALL CREDITORS: **

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, Nancy Jean Anderson died December 31, 2025. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Eric J. Locker, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 60296 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49301 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date: 2/20/2026

Miller, Canfield, Paddock & Stone, PLC
Shamra M. VanWagoner P44020
Attorney name Bar no.
277 S. Rose St, Ste 6000
Address
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
City, state, zip
(269) 383-5898
Telephone

Eric J. Locker
Personal representative
c/o Shamra M. VanWagoner
277 S. Rose St, Ste 6000
Address
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
City, state, zip

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following Mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 a.m., on March 18, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT, ANY INFORMATION WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT THE NUMBER BELOW IF YOU ARE IN ACTIVE MILITARY DUTY. Default has occurred in the conditions of a Mortgage (the "Mortgage") made by DANIEL OSBAN, a single man, as Mortgagor(s), to United Federal Credit Union, as Mortgagee. The Mortgage is dated October 28, 2022, and was recorded November 1, 2022, at Liber 1225, Page 683 of Cass County Records. The amount claimed to be due on said Mortgage and unpaid at the date of this Notice is TWO HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED TWENTY-NINE AND 94/100 ($250,929.94) DOLLARS, including interest on the applicable indebtedness at a rate of 5.875% per annum. This sum will increase as additional interest, costs, expenses, and attorney fees accrue under the Mortgage and its related note and which are permitted under Michigan law after the date of this Notice. No legal or equitable proceedings have been instituted to recover the debt secured by the Mortgage, and the power of sale in the Mortgage has become operative by reason of the default. At the date and time as referenced previously in this Notice, the Mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the property herein described, or some part of them, at public auction, to the highest bidder, for the purpose of satisfying the amount due and unpaid on the Mortgage, along with interest due, the legal costs and charges of sale as allowed by statute and/or the Mortgage, and any taxes and insurance that the Mortgagee pays on or prior to the date of said sale. The property mentioned and described in the Mortgage, as located in the Township of Ontwa, County of Cass, and State of Michigan, are more particularly described as follows: The South 55 feet of Outlot "B", Lawndale, according to the recorded plat thereof as recorded in Liber 1, page 226, Cass County Records. Excepting Beginning at the Southeast corner thereof; thence North 89° 56' West along the Northerly line of Oak Street, 165 feet; thence Northerly, 55 feet; thence South 89° 56' East, 165 feet to the West line of Cherry Lane; thence South, 55 feet to the point of beginning; Address: 24268 Oak Street, Edwardsburg, MI 49112; Tax Parcel No.: 14-090-185-020-00; together with all existing or subsequently erected or affixed buildings, improvements, and fixtures; all easements, rights of way, streets, roads, alleys, and public places, privileges, and appurtenances, public or private, now or later used in connection with the premises; and all rights to make divisions of the land that are exempt from the platting requirements of all applicable land division or platting acts, as amended from time to time. Attention Purchasers: the foreclosing Mortgagee reserves the right to cancel the sale prior to sale or to rescind this sale at any time. In that event, your damages, if any, will be limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at the sale, plus interest. If the mortgaged property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention Homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. The length of the redemption period will be six (6) months from date of sale, unless the redemption period is shortened pursuant to MCL 600.3241a or MCL 600.3238, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of sale or as otherwise provided by statute. DATED: February 14, 2026, ANDREW W. BARNES (P70571) BUTZEL LONG P.C. ATTORNEYS FOR UNITED FEDERAL CREDIT UNION 317 Center Street South Haven, MI 49090 269-287-2010 (02-14)(03-07)

POKAGON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF REVIEW MEETING 2026
Pokagon Township Board of Review will meet to hear appeals of the 2026 Assessments at:
Pokagon Township Hall 30683 Peavine St. Dowagiac, MI 49047
Tuesday March 3rd 5:30 P.M. Organizational Meeting, No Appeals
Monday March 9th 9 A.M. To 12 Noon & 1 P.M. to 4 P.M.
Thursday March 12th 1:30 P.M. To 4:30 P.M. & 6:00 P.M. to 9:00P.M.
Residents and Non-Residents my protest by letter and must be received by March 12th, 2026

Beginning factors and ratios for each class of property are as follows:
Tentative Ratio % Factor **Industrial** 47.17 1.0600
Agriculture 49.23 1.0156 **Residential** 52.48 0.9527
Commercial 47.83 1.0454 **Personal** 50.00 1.0000

Assessments have been adjusted to result in an anticipated multiplier of 1.0000 for each class. With proposal A in effect the Taxable Values, excluding new construction and transfers of ownership are capped at the rate of inflation, 2.7%.

Linda Preston
Pokagon Township Supervisor

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on March 18, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Jayneth Nelson, a married woman
Original Mortgagee: Household Finance Corporation III
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Citigroup Mortgage Loan Trust 2018-B
Date of Mortgage: March 15, 2002
Date of Mortgage Recording: March 20, 2002
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $31,566.80
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Village of Vandalia, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: Lots 20 and 21, 3rd Addition, Village of Vandalia
Common street address (if any): 18164 W State St, Vandalia, MI 49095-9701
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: February 14, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1584134 (02-14)(03-07)

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in CASS County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on March 18, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE INFORMATION: Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Stefon Luckey, a single man, whose address is 215 W. State Street, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031, as original Mortgagors, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Rocket Mortgage LLC f/k/a Quicken Loans, LLC, being a mortgage dated September 10, 2021, and recorded on September 16, 2021 in Liber 1203 Page 1781, Cass County Records, State of Michigan and then assigned to Rocket Mortgage, LLC f/k/a Quicken Loans, LLC, as assignee as documented by an assignment dated November 11, 2025 and recorded on November 13, 2025 in Liber 1268 Page 1460, Cass County Records, Michigan, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of SIXTY-NINE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED THIRTY-FOUR AND 77/100 DOLLARS ($69,534.77). Said premises are situated in the Village of Cassopolis, County of Cass, State of Michigan, and are described as: LOT NUMBER 4 AND THE WEST ONE-HALF OF LOT NUMBER 9, BLOCK 1 SOUTH, RANGE 2 WEST, IN THE ORIGINAL PLAT OF THE VILLAGE OF CASSOPOLLS, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN LIBER 54 OF DEEDS, PAGE 575, CASS COUNTY RECORDS. Street Address: 215 W. State Street, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA § 600.3241a in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of the sale. If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCLA § 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WE OBTAIN WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE. Dated: February 14, 2026, For more information, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing: Robert A. Blumberg (P87490), Johnson, Blumberg, & Associates, LLC, 30 North LaSalle St., Suite 3650 Chicago, Illinois, 60602. Telephone: (312) 541-9710 File No.: MI 26 6967 (02-14)(03-07)

MILTON TOWNSHIP, CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
APPEAL, INTERPRETATION AND PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

To: The residents and property owners of Milton Township, Cass County Michigan and any other interested parties.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE the Milton Township Zoning Board of Appeals will conduct a public hearing and meeting on Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., at the Milton Township Hall, 32097 Bertrand Street, Niles, MI 49120, to consider the following:

1. Two applications made by Brennan Tracy Magee regarding their property at 70744 Conrad Road, Niles, MI within the Township (Parcel Numbers 14-070-013-019-00 and 14-070-013-021-01); which consists of two side-by-side parcels 9 acres in total area located in the Agricultural Production District Zoning Classification for:
· An interpretation of the Milton Township Zoning Ordinance's definition of "home-based business" contained in Section 2.09 and Special Use Standards for home-based business contained in Section 15.35 of the Ordinance with reference to "independent trucking"; and
· Appeal of the Zoning Administrator's written decision of December 15, 2025, determining that the Special Land Use application to the planning commission was incomplete because the storage and staging of numerous semi-truck trailers does not constitute an "independent trucking" home-based business but is an "open air business" which is not permitted in the Agricultural Production District Zoning Classification.
Considerations for the Zoning Board of Appeals in making interpretations of the Zoning Ordinance are contained in Section 17.03C. of the Zoning Ordinance. Standards of review for the Zoning Board of Appeals in considering an appeal are contained in Section 17.07 of the Zoning Ordinance; and

2. Such other and further matters that may be lawfully before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Anyone interested in reviewing the application referenced above, the zoning administrator's letter(s), the Township Zoning Map or the Township Zoning Ordinance may examine a copy of the same by contacting the Township Clerk at the phone number or email address below hereafter until the time of said hearing and may further examine the same at said public hearing. The Milton Township Zoning Ordinance and map are on the township's website at www.miltontwpmi.gov.

Written comments will be received from any interested people concerning the foregoing by the Milton Township Clerk at the address of email address below at any time during regular business hours up to the date of the hearing and may be further received by the Zoning Board of Appeals at the hearing.

All interested persons are invited to attend at the aforesaid time and place. Milton Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed material being considered at the hearing, to individuals with disabilities at the hearing upon four (4) days' notice to the Milton Township Clerk. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Milton Township Clerk at the address or telephone number listed below.

Milton Township Zoning Board of Appeals
Robert Benjamin, Chairman
Kristen Barrera, Clerk
MILTON TOWNSHIP, CASS COUNTY, MI
32097 Bertrand Street
Niles, MI 49120 www.Miltontwpmi.gov

Calvin Township Notice of March Board of Review
March 3, 2026 – Organizational Meeting will be held at the Township Hall, located at 18693 Mt. Zion St, Cassopolis, at 10:00 am. No appeals will be heard at this meeting.
March 11th – Official MBOR, held at the Township Hall from 9:30am – 3:30pm. Appeals will be heard by appointment, and these can be scheduled by calling Krys at (269) 228-3331 or email kam.assessing@gmail.com. Walk-ins will be seen as permits. Mailed or Emailed petitions must be received by March 13th at 5:00pm.
March 12th – MBOR, held at the Township Hall from 3:00pm – 9:00pm, located at the Township Hall. Appeals will be heard by appointment, which can be scheduled by calling Krys at (269) 228-3331 or email kam.assessing@gmail.com.
Walk-ins will be seen as permits. Mailed or Emailed petitions must be received by March 11th at 5:00pm.

Howard Charter Township Cass County, Michigan
NOTICE OF PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

TO: RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF HOWARD CHARTER TOWNSHIP AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a public hearing before the Planning Commission of Howard Charter Township, Cass County, Michigan will be held during a special meeting of the Planning Commission on March 25, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the Township Office, 1345 Barron Lake Road, Niles, Michigan to consider the Rezone Request by Jeffrey T Gerrits for the consideration of rezoning parcel #14-020-019-050-00 from R1-Low Density District to C2-Commercial District, to summarize, accomplish the following:

To enable Mrs. Gerrits to open a salon.

Owner of record: Jeffrey T Gerrits
Parcel number: 14-020-019-050-00
Parcel address: Lake St, Niles MI 49120
Parcel description: 252B SEC 19 T7S R16W COM 1149.9 FT E OF S ¼ POST,
TH E 145.2 FT, N 300 FT, W 145.2 FT, S 300 FT TO BEG.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that you are invited to attend the hearing and to present your opinions or position relative to the subject of this hearing. If you are unable to attend the hearing, you may send a letter stating your opinions or position to the Howard Charter Township Office, 1345 Barron Lake Road, Niles, MI 49120, Attention: Zoning Administrator.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the application describing the action or relief being sought and Township Zoning Ordinance #192 is available for public inspection, at the Township Office on regular business days during regular business hours.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Township will provide necessary, reasonable auxiliary aids and services at the hearing to individuals with disabilities upon five (5) days' notice to the Howard Charter Township Clerk of the need for the same. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Township by email at, depclerk@howardtwp.org in writing, or by calling the Clerk at the Township office at the address and/or phone number provided below.

Published: 02/28/2026
Linda McGregor, Zoning Administrator
1345 Barron Lake Rd, Niles, Michigan 49120 (269) 684-0072

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM on 4/1/2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Names of Mortgagor(s): Ronald Reeves. Original mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Quicken Loans, LLC. Date of mortgage: 4/29/2021. Mortgage recorded on 5/7/2021 as Document No. 178441, in Liber 1195, Page 1573. Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Rocket Mortgage, LLC. Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: $184,942.67 Mortgaged premises: Situated in Cass County, and described as: LAND SITUATED IN THE TOWNSHIP OF HOWARD, COUNTY OF CASS, STATE OF MICHIGAN, IS DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: LOT(S) 8 OF HORTON ACRES ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN LIBER 1-H OF PLATS, PAGE 353 OF CASS COUNTY RECORDS. Commonly known as 2725 Horton Ct, Niles, MI 49120. The redemption period will be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless the property is abandoned or used for agricultural purposes. If the property is determined abandoned under MCL 600.3241a, the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days after the statutory notice, whichever is later. If the property is determined abandoned under MCL 600.3241, the redemption period will be 1 month from the date of such sale. If the property is presumed to be used for agricultural purposes pursuant to MCL 600.3240(16), the redemption period is 1 year from the date of such sale. The redemption period may be extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. If the above referenced property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of Act 236 of 1961, under MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Date of Notice: 02/28/2026. Codilis & Moody, P.C. 15W030 North Frontage Road, Suite 100 Burr Ridge, IL 60527 (313) 536-2500. This law firm is a debt collector. C&M File 23-26-00066 (02-28)(03-21)

Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM on MARCH 11, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Bernice L. Crawford, a single woman, to The CIT Group/Sales Financing, Inc., a Delaware Corporation, Mortgagee, dated November 9, 1998, and recorded November 12, 1998, in Liber 681, Page 1291 Cass County Records, Michigan. Said mortgage is now held by U.S. Bank National Association, as Trustee, for Lehman ABS Manufactured Housing Contract Senior/Subordinate Asset-Backed Certificate Trust, Series 2001-B, by assignment. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Fifteen Thousand Six Hundred Twenty-Two and 51/100 Dollars ($15,622.51).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Cass County, Michigan at 10:00 AM on MARCH 11, 2026.
Said premises are located in the Township of Calvin, Cass County Michigan, and are described as:
The East half of the Northeast Quarter of Section 13, Town 7 South, Range 14 West, excepting therefrom, the South 1105.5 feet thereof. Also excepting therefrom, the North 11.65 5/8 chains thereof. Also excepting therefrom, Beginning 6.65 5/8 chains South of the Northeast corner of Section 13, Town 7 South, Range 14 West; thence South 20 rods; thence West 80 rods; thence North 20 rods; thence East 80 rods to the point of beginning. Also excepting therefrom, The North four (4) Rods of the south Fifty-one (51) Rods of the East half of the Northeast quarter of Section 13, Town 7 South, Range 14 West, Calvin Township, Cass County, Michigan. Also excepting therefrom, The North ten (10) Rods of the south forty-seven (47) Rods of the East half of the Northeast Quarter of Section 13, Town 7 South, Range 14 West, Calvin Township, Cass County, Michigan. Also excepting therefrom, Commencing 51 Rods North of the Southwest corner of the East half of the Northeast quarter; thence North 264 feet; thence East to the Section Line; thence South 264 feet; thence West to the point of beginning. Section 13, Town 7 South, Range 14 West. Also excepting therefrom, Part of the East Half of the Northeast Quarter of Section 13, Town 7 South, Range 14 West, described as: From the Northeast corner of said Section 13, measure North 89 degrees 25'20" West, along the North line of said Section, 1328.03 feet to the Northwest corner of the East Half of the Northeast Quarter of said Section; thence South along the East Eighth line of said Section, 769.32 feet to the point of beginning of the land herein described; thence South 89 degrees 25'20" East, 182.00 feet; thence South 125.00 feet; thence North 89 degrees 25'20" West, 182.00 feet to the East Eighth line of said Section; thence North along the Eighth line, 125.00 feet to the point of beginning.
64277 Union Rd, Vandalia, Michigan 49095
The redemption period shall be 12 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period.
Dated: February 7, 2026
File No. 25-015638
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400 (02-07)(02-28)

0900 LEGALS

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
CASS COUNTY

PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF HEARING

FILE NO.
2026-046-DE

In the matter of:
Lydia Coates Killen, Deceased

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS including: Edith Trattles Vandervoot, Lois Trattles Bowman, Charles F. Vandervoot, Daniel J. Killen, Earl Trattles, Ralph Trattles, Dorothea Trattles, Harold Trattles, Craig Bowman or their unknown heirs

whose address(es) is/are unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following:

TAKE NOTICE: A hearing will be held on March 30, 2026, at 11:30 a.m. at VIA ZOOM 952 7920 1368 Password 385529 before Judge Carol M. Bealor for the following purpose:

Petition for Probate and/or Appointment of Personal Representative Petition to Determine Interest in Real Property

Date February 20, 2026

Darren Findling Law Firm PLC
Andrew J. Black P64606
Attorney name Bar no.
414 W. Fifth St.
Address
Royal Oak, MI 48067
City, state, zip
(248)399-3300
Telephone no.

Michael Schwindaman
Petitioner name
24141 North Street
Address
Cassopolis, MI 49031
City, state, zip
(574) 292-1693
Telephone no.

0900 LEGALS

Annual Performance Report for Housing The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indian's **Annual Performance Report for Housing** is available for any residents to review. You can view it on our website at Housing Programs – Pokagon Band of Potawatomi or come and review it at the Housing & Community Development office beginning Monday, February 23 through Monday, March 23, 2026. The address for Housing & Community Development is 57824 Potawatomi Trail, Dowagiac, MI 49047.
Migwetth Thank you,

Notice is hereby given that the Howard Charter Township Board has adopted **Ordinance No. 236, entitled the "Howard Charter Township Safe Burning Ordinance."** The ordinance rescinds Ordinance No. 221 and regulates outdoor burning within Howard Charter Township. The ordinance establishes requirements and restrictions for outdoor burning, including permitted materials, hours of burning, setback distances, safety conditions, and permit requirements for commercial and non-commercial burning. The ordinance provides for enforcement by the Fire Chief and designated Township officials, authorizes inspections, assigns liability for fire suppression and damages, and establishes civil penalties for violations.
Ordinance No. 236 shall take effect **30 days after publication**.
A copy of the ordinance is available for public inspection at the Howard Charter Township Office during regular business hours.

Storage Unit Auction
28733 Middle Crossing Rd, Dowagiac, MI 49047
Auction-Wed, March 4th at 10a

Unit 5-misc. household items
Unit 13-misc. household items and clothes
Unit 30-wheelbarrow, desk and kids bike

RESERVE THIS SPACE
TODAY!

0900 LEGALS

Howard Township
Cass County, Michigan
Board of Trustees
February 17, 2026
The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm at the Township Hall.
Board Action
Approved Meeting Agenda.
Approved the minutes of the 1/20/26 Board Meeting
Approved the minutes of the 1/28/26 Budget Workshop
Approved the financial report with an ending balance of 1,956,145.81 including a CD
Approved the payment of bills through February 17, 2026
Approved the departmental reports
Public Comment Occurred
Approved Ordinance 236 Safe Burning
Approved Resolution 2026-2 Poverty Exemptions
Approved Resolution 2026-3 Set Alt Date for Dec BOR
Approved Resolution 2026-4 Set Alt Date for July BOR
Approved Resolution 2026-5 Set Alt Date for March BOR
Approved Board Appointments
Public Comment Occurred
Adjourn the meeting at 8:02 pm.

Notice of Self Storage Sale
Please take notice Just **Simple Storage - Menominee located at N710 County Rd 577, Menominee, MI, 49858** intends to hold an Auction of storage units in default of payment. **The sale will occur as an Online auction via www.bid13.com on 3/19/2026 at 12:00 PM.** Unless stated otherwise the description of the contents are household goods, furnishings and garage essentials. Sarah Cairns/Sarah A Cairns; Vincent Driscoll; Evan Casey/Evan Joseph Casey; Evan Driscoll. This sale may be withdrawn at any time without notice. 7528-336696

LAGRANGE TOWNSHIP
2026
BOARD OF REVIEW MEETING
Lagrange Township Hall 58253 M-62. Cassopolis, MI 49031
Organizational meeting March 3rd 3:30 P.M. to 4:30 P.M.
Monday, March 9th 2:00 P.M to 5:00 P.M. & 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.
Tuesday, March 17th 9:00 A.M. to Noon & 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.
Resident and Non-Resident taxpayers may send letters of protest and must be received by Wednesday, March 17th, 2026

Tentative	Ratio %	Factor
Agriculture	45.63	1.0958
Commercial	46.24	1.0813
Industrial	48.76	1.0254
Residential	42.77	1.1690
Personal	50.00	1.0000

Assessments have been adjusted to result in an anticipated multiplier of 1.0000 for each class. With proposal A in effect the Taxable Values, excluding new construction and ownership transfers are capped at the rate of inflation, 2.7%.

Brittany File
LaGrange Township Supervisor

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Don Campbell / PMG staff

Niles' Brenden Olsen shoots over Edwardsburg's Reed Gates and Maverick Gates during Wednesday night's district semifinal in Berrien Springs.

Niles uses size to beat Edwardsburg

By BEN SANDERS
Paxton Media Group

BERRIEN SPRINGS — Niles defeated Edwardsburg for the third time this season, 57-38, exploiting its size advantage at both ends. Brayden Favors led the Vikings with 16 points, Brenden Olsen added 15 and Donovyn Williams scored 10.

Maverick Gates led Edwardsburg with 12 points and Liam Sieggreen added nine, and both players hit three 3-pointers. The long shots kept the Eddies close early, and the game was tied at 13 late in the first quarter. The Vikings then went ahead for good with a 7-0 run and continued to build the lead from there

"We played mostly zone in the first quarter and they kind of light the nets," Niles coach Mark Haase said. "Then we played man the next three quarters, and I thought our man-to-man defense was very good tonight. We got the ball inside enough to take advantage, rebounding-wise we were really good. We took care of our strengths."

Edwardsburg's leading scorer on the season, Blaise Crist, attempted to play through an injury but was held scoreless and did not play in the second half.

"We didn't adjust well to the pressure later," Edwardsburg coach Jared Frick said. "Obviously not having Blaise – he tried the best he could but he really just wasn't able to go. That really hurts us. But I give credit to (Niles), they played hard, they had a good game plan, they beat us."

The Eddies graduate three seniors in Maverick Gates, Michael Wright and Gavin Roe.

"We owe them so much for them to come in and help us win 15 games," Frick said. "They deserve all the credit for all the work they've done.

Niles and Benton Harbor were rivals in the Southwestern Michigan Athletic Conference for many years, and will meet for a district title for the third time in the last four seasons.

"They've always been a rival," Haase said. "I would imagine a pretty big crowd. There will be some electricity, some good athletes on the floor, should be a heck of a game."

Edwardsburg downs Dowagiac 66-20 in the D2 district opener

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

BERRIEN SPRINGS — The Edwardsburg boys basketball team opened postseason play with a bang Monday night.

The Eddies cruised to a 66-20 win over Dowagiac in the opening round of Division 2 district play at Berrien Springs High School. Both schools were without their leading scorers – with Edwardsburg's Blaise Crist (15.8 points per game) and Dowagiac's Aiden Martin (10.1 points per game) sitting due to injuries.

Reed Gates led the Eddies with 18 points and lLucas Kline had nine while Maverick Gates and Kevin Wright added eight points apiece. Riley McCaffery scored six points to lead Dowagiac.

Edwardsburg led 14-4 after the first quarter and ended the first half on a 16-0 run to take a 33-8 lead into the break. The Eddies led by as many as 48; the 46-point win margin is Edwardsburg's largest since defeating Hartford 69-21 in 2020.

"We just started a little slow but did the right things long enough and did what we were supposed to do," said Edwardsburg coach Jared Frick. "I thought our kids battled through some issues early and then just made shots and played hard until that was the difference."

After a 4-4 start to the season, the Eddies have won 11 of their last 15 games.

"We're playing pretty good here of late," Frick said. "We're shooting the ball while we're playing with great confidence and starting to get a little more physical, which is good."

The Chieftains closed the season with a 3-18 record in year one under head coach Craig Schau. While the young Chieftains experienced the growing pains of a young team, Schau was proud of the way his team battled night in and night out.

"It was a learning season for everyone," Schau said. "Now we're gonna know each other a little bit, but just understand what the expectations are. I think it was good. Looking back, we're excited to get into the off season. Now that we've gotten that first season behind ourselves and really just get to work and get into player development… Good season, I love all the guys here and the coaching staff and we'll continue to get better."

Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

Edwardsburg's Reed Gates drives to the basket Monday against Dowagiac.

Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

Edwardsburg's Michael Wrigght defends Dowagiac's Aaron Morgan Monday night.

The Chieftains will graduate just one senior from the team in Devin Rock, who played sparingly in the second half due to injury. Schau said his presence will be missed. "His leadership, vocally and on the court, is just the way that every guy should play, honestly," Schau said. "He set a great example for what we're looking for, which is hard work, effort, all the intangible things as well and obviously as a pretty skilled basketball player. It's going to be a big, big hole to fill with him being gone, but we just appreciate him for the leadership this year."

Frick and his team move on to face Wolverine Conference foe Niles Wednesday in the semifinal. The Eddies are looking to flip the script after dropping both regular season matchups against the Vikings.

"They're long and athletic and they throw it inside well and they play inside the paint well, so that'll be a challenge for us to work through," he said. "They try to push the pace a little bit and they're a physical team; they've played zone the past few times we've played them so just trying to work through that, get great shots and not settle for things that we can get all the time. That's going to be the challenge for us – just running the offense, being patient and then keeping the ball in the post and rebounding, playing with great physicality."

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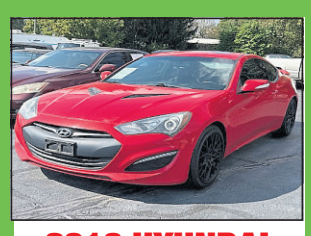

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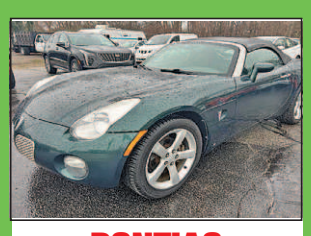

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